R. White fculp.

John Rawlet B.D.
Died Septemb: 28th: 1686. Ætat. 44.

A TREATISE OF Saeramental Covenanting WITH CHRIST:

SHEWING

The ungodly their contempt of Christ, in their Contempt of the *Sacramental Covenant.*

And calling them (not to a profanation of this holy Ordinance, but) to an understanding, serious entire Dedication of themselves to God in the *Sacramental Covenant*, and a Believing Commemoration of the Death of Christ.

Written by *J. Rawlet*, B. D. Author of the *Christian Moniter.*

The Fifth Edition. 7s d :02

With a Preface chiefly designed for the satisfaction of Dissenters, *and to exhort all Men to Peace and Unity: Not before Printed.*

Ft

London, Printed by *W. Bonny*, for *Sam. Manship* at the *Black-Bull* in *Cornhill*, near the *Royal-Exchange*, 1692.

I.
265.3
Cand
6H50

THE PREFACE.

I *Intend not to trouble the* Reader *with any particular Account of the occaſion of my Writing this plain Treatiſe (which was compoſed and firſt publiſhed many years ago) nor with Apologies for its plainneſs, or any other fault that may be found with it: Since I endeavoured as well as I could to fit it to the Deſign I had in making it. What that was, I need ſay little here, having already ſaid ſo much to that purpoſe, by way of Introduction in the firſt Chapter. The Title it ſelf may ſufficiently inform him, that the Deſign of it is to exhort and perſwade Men carefully to prepare themſelves, and then with due Reverence and Seriouſneſs to frequent the* Holy Communion, *as they would approve themſelves to be the true Diſciples of the* Lord Jeſus, *who hath commanded us to* Do this in remembrance of him. *But my chief Intention in writing this* Preface, *is to do what I am capable toward the removing of thoſe Scruples, and anſwering thoſe Objections, which may hinder any honeſt and well-meaning Perſons from their Attendance to this Holy Ordinance. Such I mean as are oft put into their Heads by thoſe who would draw them into a Separation from our* Church. *Some Objections of another Nature I have anſwered in the*

Book it self, but did not then think it needful to meddle with these, because I found not that the People, for whose sake chiefly it was first written, were much troubled with them: Nor do I now intend to launch out into any large Discourse about these Matters, which have fill'd so many Books of Controversie; after all which, I dare not pretend to say any thing new in the Case; only I shall suggest a few plain things, which fully satisfie my own mind in these Points, and may through Gods Blessing, give the same satisfaction to those who are true, willing and prepared to receive it. To such I mean who thro' the fault of their Education or Company, may be faln into these mistakes, but yet are not obstinately fixt in them, nor gone over into the way of Separation, *but are of an humble, teaching Temper; will be glad to see their Error, and to revoke it; having so much regard to the* Peace *and* Unity *of the* Church, *that they are very desirous in all things to maintain* Communion *with us in the* Publick Worship, *so far as they are convinced they may lawfully do it. To such as these, I shall now apply my Discourse with all the clearness and mildness that I possibly can: my business is only to instruct and perswade, not to expose or willingly to exasperate any body: for I always reckon that the raising of Mens Passions, is a very improper way for the rectifying of their Judgments. The two most common* Objections *against receiving the* Communion *in our* Parish Churches, *are* (1) *On Account of the Gesture then used:* (2) *Because we have, as they call it a Mixt* Communion.

Object. 1. "*Some are not willing to come to the* Com-
" munion, because they are required to receive it
" kneeling. And this they judge unlawful, for such
" Reasons as these, (1.) Our Saviour has not com-
" manded it, nor did the Apostles, that we read, use
" it.

" it. (2) It ſeems unſuitable to the Nature of this " Ordinance, which is an Holy Feaſt. (3.) It " hath been abuſed by *Papiſts* in their Idolatrous " Worſhip of the Hoſt. (4.) They look upon the " impoſing of it as an injury to their Chriſtian " Liberty. *To anſwer theſe in order briefly.*

(1.) *As to the firſt Reaſon,* That it was not commanded by our Bleſſed Saviour, nor uſed by his Apoſtles at the firſt Inſtitution of this Sacrament.

Anſ. (1.) *Neither did our Saviour enjoyn any other Geſture, whether Standing or Sitting: by this Argument therefore neither would any of theſe be lawful. But here you will preſently reply,* That he and his Apoſtles uſed another poſture, and their Example ought to determine us. *Let us then take it for granted that they received it in the ſame Geſture, which they uſed at their Meals; this is commonly taken to be leaning along, and therefore if we will ſtrictly follow their Example, we ought to uſe the ſame. If it be replied,* That now ſitting is our Table poſture, and therefore may be moſt fitly uſed inſtead of leaning. *Pray then bethink you well, if you reckon there is power enough in bare cuſtom, ſo far to alter the Geſture,* viz. *from leaning to ſitting, why may it not then as well change it to kneeling? Since, as it is our cuſtom to ſit at our common Tables ſo is it the cuſtom of our* Church *to kneel at this* Holy Table. *And what is much more, we have alſo the Authority of our Superiors both in* Church *and* State *obliging us hereto. If it be ſaid, that kneeling is not ſo proper to come in the room of leaning as ſitting is, on Account of the Nature of this Ordinance, we ſhall ſpeak to that preſently by it ſelf.*

(2.) *But ſuppoſe that our Saviour and his Apoſtles had ſitten at the firſt Celebrating of this Ordinance, yet does not this oblige us to uſe the ſame Geſture; ſince a*

bare Example, tho of Christ and his Apostles, is not always a Rule for the guiding of our Practice, that therefore we must do thus and thus, meerly because they did so. Example without Precept, lays not any necessary Obligation upon us. Christ's own Example certainly binds no farther then he designs it should do so, and what reason have we to imagine that he designed it should bind us on this or that Instance, where he has never given us the least Intimation of any such Design. Many things we know there are in the Life of Christ, which it is so far from being our Duty, that it would be Presumption and Sin to offer at an Imitation of them; as in his Miraculous Works. Other things there are of a Civil Nature, in which to endeavour an Imitation of him, would be weakness and folly, as to cloath our selves in a seamless Coat, because he wore such a one, with other things of the like Nature. But to come nearer to our purpose; and to instance in the Circumstances of Religious Worship. Suppose we had never read that our Saviour used any other posture in Prayer but standing; would that, think you, make it unlawful for us to kneel in Prayer? No more then, for ought I see, does his sitting at his last Supper make it unlawful for us to receive it kneeling. Again, as to the other Sacrament, that of Baptism; tho the Apostles generally used dipping, yet you do not I suppose, think we are thereby obliged to use the same custom. And why should you condemn in one Instance, what you allow in another of the same nature? But to come to this Sacrament it self: Are there not several other Circumstances which our blessed Saviour and his Apostles used at the first Institution of it, which you who made this Objection do not think your selves bound to observe? As particularly in respect of the time; it was at Evening; and is called a Supper; and yet I hope you do not

think

think it unlawful to receive it at Noon. And ſurely the Geſture in which, *is as much a Circumſtance as the time* when, *or the place* where, *they received it. But if you anſwer,* There may be a particular Reaſon given for their taking that time, *viz.* Becauſe it was at the Paſchal Supper, which uſed to be eaten in the Evening; *even ſo for the very ſame reaſon might this* Sacrament *at firſt be received in a Table-poſture, becauſe they were now at* Supper, *and ſo continued in the ſame poſture; but this without any deſign to bind us to the ſame poſture, any more than to the ſame time, for any thing we can find. For our Lord ſpeaks not a word of it that we read in any of the Evangeliſts; nor yet St.* Paul, *when ſpeaking of this* Sacrament, *he tells us,* He delivered what he received of the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 11.23, *&c. So that we have hence great reaſon to conclude, that whatever Geſture was uſed by our Bleſſed* Saviour *and his* Apoſtles *at the firſt inſtitution of this* Sacrament, *yet are we no way obliged to an imitation of the ſame; but either one or another may be uſed, as the cuſtom of the* Church *or the prudence of our Rulers ſhall direct.*

Yea, (Laſtly) *and to this purpoſe may we much more reaſonably plead the Example of our* Bleſſed Saviour; *ſince both he himſelf and his Apoſtles were wont commonly to comply with the innocent uſages of the* Jewiſh Church, *even in matters pertaining to* Religious Worſhip, *for which yet there was no expreſs command given in the* Old Teſtament, *as might eaſily be ſhewn in many Inſtances frequently urged by learned Men; who alſo obſerve, that even the Holy* Sacraments *themſelves which our Lord appointed, do bear a very near reſemblance to ſome Rites and Cuſtoms that were much in uſe amongſt the* Jews, *to ſhew how little he affected Innovation in ſuch matters. And thus we know the*

Apoſtle Paul *argues in a caſe much of this Nature,* 1 Cor. 11. 16. If any Man ſeem to be contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, nor the Churches of God. *The cuſtom of the Church will have a great Influence over a peaceable Temper.*

But (2.) It may be urged, that ſitting is moſt agreeable to this Ordinance, as it is a Feaſt; ſhewing that freedom we have in Communion with *Chriſt*, by whom we are entertained at this Holy Supper.

Anſ. (1.) *You find no ſuch thing ſaid in* Holy Scripture; *Why then ſhould you argue at this rate? Is not this contrary to your own Profeſſion at other times? And I might truly tell you that in the other* Sacrament *you do not obſerve this your own Rule; for few or none that I know, except the* Anabaptiſts, *uſe dipping or plunging over the Head in Baptiſm; and yet we read in Scripture how this repreſents our being buried with Chriſt; and raiſed again to newneſs of life. And yet becauſe this is not of the Eſſence of the* Ordinance, *you can follow the cuſtom of the* Church; *and why then ſhould you be more ſcrupulous in the preſent Caſe, where you have nothing like ſo good a pretence?*

But (2.) *Tho' this be a Feaſt yet it is not a Common, but a Spiritual Feaſt, and therefore you cannot thence rationally argue that you muſt uſe the ſame Geſture that we do at our common Tables. Rather when we conſider by whom we are here entertained, the greateſt Reverence and Humility doth well beſeem us in all our Carriage and Behaviour; which yet is no way inconſiſtent with the moſt near and intimate* Communion *with our God and Saviour, in the exerciſe of our Graces and receiving an abundant encreaſe of them.*

As, Conſider eſpecially what Tranſactions there are betwixt pious Souls and their Redeemer at this Holy Feaſt, and you will acknowledge that kneeling is a Geſture

ſture no way unſuitable thereto. Here we do ſolemnly oblige our ſelves to be Chriſts Diſciples; and here he ſeals to us the Pardon of our Sins; and gives us Title to Eternal Glory. And is it any way unſuitable for a Subject to kneel, whilſt he is taking the Oath of Alegiance *before his Prince? Or when his Prince beſtows on him a Pardon, or a Patent for ſome great Honour, is it unfit for him to receive theſe kneeling? So that conſider this* Sacrament *under theſe Notions, you ſee how agreeable this Geſture is to the Nature and Deſign of it. To this let me only add, that even at the receiving of the Holy Elements from the hand of Chriſt's Miniſter, we do joyn with him in that moſt Solemn Prayer,* That the Body and Blood of Chriſt may preſerve our Soul and Body unto *Everlaſting Life:* And can any thing be more decent, than to *kneel,* when we are thus offering up our Prayers to *God?*

(3.) It is urged, That the *Papiſts* brought in this Cuſtom, and do abuſe it in their Idolatrous Worſhip of the Hoſt, as they call it; and we by this means do ſeem to joyn with them, and confirm them in their Error.

Anſ. (1.) *This has never been yet proved, ſo far as I have ſeen, that the* Papiſts *firſt brought in kneeling at the* Sacrament: *For I think it's undeniable from all the* Records *we have of the uſage of the* Primitive Chriſtians *in the purer Ages of the* Church (*long before* Popery, *and that moſt abſurd Doctrin of it,* Tranſubſtantiation, *was ever known in the World*) *that they uſed the ſame Geſture in receiving the* Communion, *which they did in other parts of Religious Worſhip, which generally was ſtanding. And conſequently afterwards, when kneeling came in uſe at their Prayers, then moſt probably was kneeling at this* Sacrament *practiſed alſo. Nor, as I take it, even amongſt them, do they intend*

tend ſo much to expreſs their Worſhip of the Conſecrated Bread, *by kneeling when they receive it, as by their Adoring at the Elevation of it by the Prieſt; which is I reckon immediately after the Conſecration.*

2. *But let them do as they will, What does it concern us? Except we ſhall imagine that nothing which* Papiſts *have abuſed may be lawfully uſed by others, even when 'tis ſeparate from that abuſe; which ſurely no man will be ſo unreaſonable as to aſſert. If they have uſed to kneel in* Idolatrous Worſhip; *may not we therefore kneel in the Worſhip of the true God? If it be ſaid,* That we confirm them in their Error. *This alſo is ſaid without reaſon. Since the Judgment of our Church is ſufficiently known in this point; and in the Rubrick after the* Communion *it is moſt expreſly declared,* "That the reaſon of our kneeling is to ſig-"nifie our humble and grateful acknowledgment "of the benefits given by Chriſt to all Worthy "Receivers, but not any way intended as an Ado-"ration of the Sacramental Bread and Wine, "which were Idolatry to be abhorred of all "Faithful Chriſtians: *with more to that purpoſe. And this I think may ſufficiently vindicate our* Church *from being any way guilty of confirming the* Papiſts *in their groſs miſtakes in this matter, or in any the ill conſequences of thoſe miſtakes, againſt all which ſhe doth ſo plainly proteſt. I might alſo further add, that beſide our ſelves, there are multitudes of* Proteſtants *as well as* Papiſts, *who receive the* Sacrament *kneeling,* viz. *all the* Lutheran Churches, *whilſt its commonly ſaid, that the* Pope *himſelf receives ſitting.*

(*Laſtly*) It may be objected, That this is an abridgment of our Chriſtian liberty, to be confined to one particular poſture: Since Chriſt left it free, why ſhould we be bound up to one more than another?

The

The Apoſtle having bidden us to ſtand faſt in the liberty Chriſt hath given us.

Anſ. (1.) *In Anſwer to this, pray conſider, That ſuppoſing it was a fault in your Rulers, to confine you to one particular Geſture; yet does this no way make it unlawful for you to uſe that Geſture. Let us then take it for granted, which I think is hitherto evident, that kneeling is as lawful as ſtanding or any other Geſture; if then it be ſo before its commanded, I hope you are not ſo weak as to think that the command alters the Nature of it, and makes it unlawful, as being an encroachment upon your liberty, for by that reaſon you ought to do it if it was forbidden, that ſo you might maintain your liberty. And what confuſion would this produce? Chriſt having left it free to uſe this Geſture or that, ſurely the command of my Superiors may very well determine my choice, without doing me the leaſt injury.* If you ſtill urge that you muſt by no means betray your Chriſtian liberty.

(2.) *Conſider, This is not a liberty wherein Chriſtianity is at all concerned one way or other: Whether it be granted or denied, its no prejudice to* Religion; *which may either way be maintain'd very well. So that the* Apoſtles *Injunction reaches not to your Caſe. For he is ſpeaking of that liberty from the* Bondage of Jewiſh Ceremonies, *which* Chriſt *had vouchſafed, but yet ſome Judaizing Chriſtians oppoſed it, and zealouſly Preached up the neceſſity of obſerving them, to the great prejudice of the Goſpel and the Corrupting of Religion: And this after the Apoſtles had expreſly determined the contrary. But what's all this to our Rulers determining of Circumſtances that relate to the Worſhip of God, whether as to Time, Place, Habit, Geſture, or the like? As in the preſent Caſe, when ſeveral Geſtures are equally lawful, and our Rulers think*

it

it very Orderly and Decent that ſome one ſhould be generally obſerved; and judge kneeling to be at leaſt as convenient as any other, and therefore enjoyn it to be uſed: What hurt is it either to us, to Religion, or to our Liberty, to be confined to the uſe of this Poſture? Surely our rendring of Chriſtian Obedience *in ſuch Caſes, is no Encroachment upon our* Chriſtian Liberty. *Nor is there any manner of conſequence, that becauſe we muſt oppoſe the corrupt Doctrines and Impoſitions of falſe Teachers, ſuch that contradicted the Governors of the Church, therefore we may diſobey the lawful commands of thoſe who have Authority over us.*

Let it be well conſidered, That none do more abridge themſelves of their Chriſtian Liberty *in this Caſe, than they who through weakneſs, or prejudice, take up a conceit, that only this or that particular Geſture is lawful, and then confine themſelves only to that, when neither God, nor their Superiors do ſo confine them. By ſuch a falſe Judgment does a man loſe his liberty, and not barely by being reſtrainld, as to his external practice, whilſt his Judgment is left free; as in the Caſe before us. My Superiors think fit to enjoyn kneeling, but without requiring me to declare that I think this Geſture neceſſary in it ſelf, and all others unlawful: In this they leave me to the freedom of my own judgment. And* ſo *my judgment ſuppoſes*, That both this, and ſtanding and ſitting are all lawful. *Whereupon I can cheerfully ſubmit to what is required; and alſo if I go into* France, *where ſtanding is uſed, or into other Countries where another Geſture is uſed, I can readily comply with one or the other, and ſo do enjoy the benefit of my* Chriſtian Liberty. *Whereas he who judges only one of theſe, ſuppoſe ſitting to be lawful, does thereby reſtrain*

reſtrain his own liberty, and makes that neceſſary which Chriſt *never commanded; that unlawful which he never forbid; and ſo are more liable to that charge of adding to the word, than our Rulers are, whilſt for order ſake, they ſingle out one amongſt ſeveral indifferent things, and enjoyn the obſervance of it.*

Object. 2. *The next common Objection is againſt* A mixt Communion, *as ſome ſtile it.* Many will not Communicate in their Pariſh Churches, becauſe ſome are admitted there of ſuch bad lives as they reckon will defile thoſe who hold Communion with them.

Anſ. (1.) *I would deſire ſuch to conſider that by the Rules of our Church, no perſons either groſly ignorant, or of ſcandalous lives, ought to be admitted to the* Holy Communion. *None ſhould come till they are Confirmed, or are fit for Confirmation, of which their own Miniſter is to be judge. And thoſe whom he knows to be notoriouſly vicious, he is to warn them by no means to preſume to come, till by their Repentance and Amendment of Life, they have given ſatisfaction to the Congregation; as may be ſeen in the Rubrick before the* Communion. *Such as theſe, the* Miniſter *and* Church Wardens, *if they know them, are obliged to preſent, that they may be proceeded againſt according to the* Canons. *And in the Exhortation before the* Communion, *the* Miniſter *does moſt ſolemnly warn all wicked Livers not to come to the* Lords Table, *except they Repent of their Sins, and forſake them, ſhewing how great the danger is of unworthy receiving; and thoſe whom he knows to live in Malice, he is directed by the Rubrick, by no means to ſuffer them to come, till they are reconciled, if they are both obſtinate. Whereby you*

may

may perceive what care the Church *has taken in this particular. And though through the fault of particular persons, there may be a neglect of Discipline, yet I am apt to think that they who for this Reason do with-draw from the* Church *of* England, *will scarce find any* Church *in the* Christian World *with which they can more comfortably hold* Communion, *on account of the holiness of its Members.*

(2.) *Tho' I would not plead for any sinful Remissness, yet it cannot be expected, that in our own, or any other Nation, where Christianity is the Religion of the Country, there can be the same strict Discipline kept up, that was in the* Primitive Times, *when their number was much less, and when few, but sincerely good Men would profess* Christianity, *considering to what Persecutions that very Profession did oftimes expose them. The Case now must needs be much different, when the Laws and Custom of the Country, oblige all Men to this Profession; which therefore they will readily make, but will not so readily be brought to lead such an holy and good life, as is agreeable thereto. And after the greatest care and strictness, there will be* Tares growing up with the Wheat: In a Great House there will be Vessels of Dishonour, as well as Honour.

(3.) *Suppose there are some Unworthy* Communicants *admitted to the* Lord's Table, *what hurt can this be to those who are duly prepared to come thithither? No more, for ought I can discern, than it will hinder my relishing or digesting my Bodily Food that there is one sits by me, who has a weak Stomach and bad Digestion. Nor do I know any good reason, why it should more defile, or any way prejudice me, to receive the* Communion *with those who are unfit for it,*

it, than to joyn with them in Prayers, Hearing, or any other Religious Office. *Whilst I partake not of other Mens Sins, surely I may joyn with them in the performance of necessary Duties.*

But here is commonly alledged that of the Apostles 1 Cor. 5. 11. With such a one, no not to eat; viz. *Not with an openly profane person. For Answer, This* Text *is by many good Expositors judged to forbid our familiarity with wicked Men in our common Conversation: That we should not make them our intimate Friends and Associates; that so we may both secure our selves from being infected; and may also bring them to shame, whose Company we avoid; as the* Jews *of old did that of a* Leper. *And indeed there is much more danger of Infection by familiarity in daily Converse, than by joyning with them in* Religious Duties. *But should we grant that this* Text *enjoyns the removal of notoriously wicked persons from their* Religious Assemblies, *as some other* Texts *more plainly do; yet does it chiefly concern those who have power so to remove them; those in the* Church, *who have Authority for that purpose. But surely private Persons are only thereby obliged to do their duty in their places, toward the removal of such* corrupt Members. *And here I would desire those who are most forward to make this* Objection, *to consider seriously whether they have done* their *Duty in this respect. Have you gone to those whom you know to be scandalous Livers, and with plainness and meekness admonish'd them of their Faults; and if they have proved obstinate, have you according to the method of the Gospel, taken with you some others to assist you in this work? And if still your Endeavours have been ineffectual, have you acquainted the* Church, *those especially with whom the Government*

of

of it is intrusted, that they might proceed against such obstinate Offenders, according to their desarts? If you have not done this, why do you accuse others for their neglect, whilst your selves are so guilty? Why do you blame Ministers for receiving bad Men to the Communion, *whilst they perhaps know nothing of their Crimes? For it is not enough sure, for any Man's Condemnation, that he is in the general, said to be an ill liver, whilst there is no particular Crime laid to his charge, nor any body comes in to give information and proof of his Vicious Carriage. But if you say you have done your duty, and yet the Offender is still continued in the* Church: *Surely then you may be satisfied, that this will not be laid to your charge, since you are no way guilty of it. And why should you fear to suffer for another mans sin which you do not promote? Or think you shall want the Blessings promis'd to the worthy* Communicant, *because without your fault, there are some unworthy persons admitted there.* What appearance of Reason is there, or what ground from Scripture, that upon this account you should either neglect your duty, or with-draw from your Fellow-Christians into any Separate Assembly? *Pray take good heed, lest whilst you seem afraid of the Company of such sinners, you your selves do not run into the Commission of a great Sin: breaking the* Peace *of the* Church, *dividing the* Members, *and disobeying those who are set over you in the* Lord, *to admonish and guide you.*

Lastly, I shall only recommend one thing more to your Consideration. When you see one whom you look upon as a great Sinner at the Communion, *how do you know but he is sincerely penitent, and firmly resolved from this time forward, to forsake his Sins, and*

and amend his life? For he hath been plainly warned by the Minister *otherwise not to come there, and told that it is at his own great Peril if he come Impenitently. What though he hath often before been at the* Communion, *and soon after returned to his former* Courses; *yet how do we know but this may be the time wherein his Repentance is more deep and sincere, his purposes more firm and stedfast than ever? Certainly that private* Christian *who does strictly* examine himself, *looking well to the State of his own Soul, and entertains such Charitable hopes of his Brother, may, for all that I can see, come freely to* Eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup; *and does therein act much more agreeably to the* Rules *of the* Gospel, *than he that either wholly neglects the Duty, or separates from the* publick Congregation, *because some whom he judges unworthy, are tolerated in it. And he that shall read impartially the Apostle* Paul's *Exhortation to the* Corinthians, 1 Cor. 11. *will I think be of the same mind: where, tho' he severely taxes the great Disorders amongst them in their Administration of the* Lord's Supper, *yet there is not the least intimation, that the private Members of that* Church *ought to separate from it on account of them.*

And this I hope may suffice, in answer to the two main Objections, which I chiefly intended to take notice of.

Obj. 3. *Some perhaps there are, who may further object against coming to the Communion,* That we make use of the Common Prayer in the Administration of it, and they for their part are not satisfied with the use of Forms.

Ans. *I confess to me it seems very strange, that any who use to read the* Holy Scriptures, *and have*

of it is intrusted, that they might proceed against obstinate Offenders, according to their deserts? If have not done this, why do you accuse others for neglect, whilst your selves are so guilty? Why do blame Ministers for receiving bad Men to the Communion, whilst they perhaps know nothing of Crimes? For it is not enough sure, for any Condemnation, that he is in the general, said to ill liver, whilst there is no particular Crime laid his charge, nor any body comes in to give informa and proof of his Vicious Carriage. But if you you have done your duty, and yet the Offender still continued in the Church: *Surely then you be satisfied, that this will not be laid to your cha since you are no way guilty of it. And why sho you fear to suffer for another mans sin which you not promote? Or think you shall want the Bless promis'd to the worthy* Communicant, *because wi out your fault, there are some unworthy persons mitted there.* What appearance of Reason there, or what ground from Scripture, that on this account you should either neglect yo duty, or with-draw from your Fellow-Christ ans into any Separate Assembly? *Pray take go heed, lest whilst you seem afraid of the Company such sinners, you your selves do not run into the Com mission of a great Sin: breaking the* Peace *of* Church, *dividing the* Members, *and disobeyi those who are set over you in the* Lord, *to admon and guide you.*

Lastly, I shall only recommend one thing more to yo Consideration. When you see one whom you look upo as a great Sinner at the Communion, *how do yo know but he is sincerely penitent, and firmly re solved from this time forward, to forsake his Sin*

an

and amend his life? For he hath been plainly warned by the Minister *otherwise not to come there, and told that it is at his own great Peril if he come Impenitently. What though he hath often before been at the* Communion, *and soon after returned to his former* Courses; *yet how do we know but this may be the time wherein his Repentance is more deep and sincere, his purposes more firm and stedfast than ever? Certainly that private* Christian *who does strictly* examine himself, *looking well to the state of his own Soul, and entertains such Charitable hopes of his Brother, may, for all that I can see, come freely to* Eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup; *and does therein act much more agreeably to the* Rules *of the* Gospel, *than he that either wholly neglects the Duty, or separates from the* publick Congregation, *because some whom he judges unworthy, are tolerated in it. And he that shall read impartially the Apostle* Paul's *Exhortation to the* Corinthians, 1 Cor. 11. *will I think be of the same mind: where, tho' he severely taxes the great Disorders amongst them in their Administration of the* Lord's Supper, *yet there is not the least intimation, that the private Members of that* Church *ought to separate from it on account of them.*

And this I hope may suffice, in answer to the two main Objections, which I chiefly intended to take notice of.

Obj. 3. *Some perhaps there are, who may further Object against coming to the Communion,* That we make use of the Common Prayer in the Administration of it, and they for their part are not satisfied with the use of Forms.

Ans. *I confess to me it seems very strange, that any who use to read the* Holy Scriptures, *and have*

the leaſt meaſure of knowledge, ſhould make ſuch an Objection as this: For anſwer to which briefly, I ſhall deſire them to conſider, that in theſe Holy Scriptures, *eſpecially in the* Old Teſtament, *there are multitudes of Forms recorded. What elſe is the whole* Book of Pſalms *(beſides many others) which were uſed frequently by good Men of old in their* Publick Worſhip *of* God. *And, as I think is generally acknowledged on all hands, this* Worſhip *was frequented and many of theſe Forms often uſed by our bleſſed* Saviour *himſelf, and his holy* Apoſtles. *That our* Saviour *gave his* Diſciples *a Form, commanding them to uſe it as a Prayer, as well as for a Plat-form, is expreſly declared in the* Goſpel.

And yet ſhall we think it unlawful for us to uſe that ſame Form, or another fram'd according to that Model? And ſome ſuch Forms in the beſt and pureſt Ages of the Church *throughout the whole* Chriſtian World, *down to this preſent Age, have been uſed by the moſt pious and holy Men ſo far as* Hiſtory *can inform us. At this day there is ſcarce any* Church *in all* Chriſtendom, *but makes uſe of ſome Forms in their* Publick Worſhip. *Thoſe learned and good Men, who were moſt inſtrumental in carrying on the Reformation in foraign* Churches, *have not only allow'd but earneſtly pleaded for ſuch* Forms *and accordingly more or leſs are they uſed in all* Reformed Churches, *eſpecially in their Adminiſtration of* Baptiſm *and the* Lord's Supper. *At leaſt, there is not one of all thoſe* Churches *that ever I heard of, which condemns the uſe of them as unlawful: no, nor I believe not any one* Chriſtian Writer *for Fifteen hundred years and more after our* Saviour. *The Judgment and Practice of our firſt* Reformers *in this Kingdom, is ſufficiently known: For by theſe* Holy Men, Martyrs, *and* Confeſſors *was our*

Liturgy

Liturgy *first composed. And it seems very strange, that many of those who profess so much honour for their Memory, should yet have no greater esteem for their Labours, no more regard to their Example; but are ready some of them to run away from that as* Popish, *in which those* Holy Men *judged our* Reformation *from* Popery *chiefly to consist. Nay, the old* Nonconformists *in Queen* Elizabeth's, *King* James's *Days, and after, not only thought these our Prayers lawful, but some of the most eminent amongst them, for Learning and Piety, such as Mr.* Hildersham, *Mr.* Ball, *&c. have strongly pleaded for them; called upon the People to a constant reverent Attendance upon them; and very smartly condemn'd those who have separated from them, as is to be seen in their Writings. Yea, the very same is at this day done by some of greatest note amongst them; and in several of their Books there are* Forms *of* Prayer *composed for* Families *and private* Persons, *which sufficiently shews their judgment. And some other of their Writers who seem most prejudiced against* Forms, *yet expresly tell us, they dare not say they are unlawful. Surely then he must have a brow of Brass, that shall in this case oppose his own single judgment in a manner to the whole* Christian World *past and present.*

It is I know commonly asked, Where are we commanded to Pray with a Form? *To which it were Answer enough to demand, Where are we commanded to pray without a* Form? *So that by this Rule we should use no Prayers at all. If then you dare pray without a* Form, *tho' you have no express command for so doing, why may you not as lawfully pray with a* Form? *Especially when you have the command of your* Rulers *to oblige you thereto, whom* God *has commanded you in things lawful to obey. And that surely may be well esteemed lawful, which is no where forbidden, either*

directly or by any good consequence, not in one place in all the Bible; *but more than that, our* Saviour, *as was before said, gave his* Disciples a Form, *and commanded them to use it* (Luk. 11. 2.) *which I think shews it to be our Duty still to use that* Form, *and does also very fairly prove the lawfulness at least of other* Forms *agreeable thereto.*

As to what is frequently urged, of Praying in, or by the Spirit, *so far as that denotes our making use of that Assistance of the Spirit, which is common to* Christians *in all Ages, this may as well be done with a Form, as without. For else a Man could not Pray by the* Spirit, *whilst he is using the* Lords Prayer. *But whilst we pray for things agreeable to the Will of God revealed in his* Word, *and do pray with Humility, Fervency and Faith in the promises, and in the exercises of such like Graces of the Spirit; we do this while most certainly pray by the Spirit, tho' in the use of a Form: But so does not he who is destitute of these Graces, tho' he be never so ready at* Praying *without Book. Much more might be said to this purpose, but I shall only urge farther the practice of those very persons, who make this Objection. Even you your selves, who speak against Forms in the* Worship of God, *do your selves frequently use them. I doubt not but you often use the same Expressions in your Prayers; and so do the Ministers with whom you joyn; whose* Prayer *therefore so far is a* Form; *yea every* Prayer *you joyn with, is a* Form *as to you, and you are as much limited and confined by it, as by a Form. But that which I chiefly intend, is this, that you do commonly use* Forms *in the* Worship of God; *I mean whilst you sing* David's Psalms, *which you I am now speaking to, I suppose frequently do. And I would fain know what manner of Reason can be given, Why it should not be as lawful to use a* Form of Prayer

Prayer *as a Form of praiſe, ſince in both we worſhip God? Yea many of theſe* Pſalms *are indeed* Prayers *in the ſtricter ſenſe, and he that uſes them with* Devotion, *doth accordingly Addreſs himſelf to God in the uſe of them. And where, I beſeech you, is the unlawfulneſs of this? And if it be lawful thus to praiſe God and pray to him with a Form, when put into Verſe and Metre, why is it not as lawful to do it out of Verſe? If it be ſaid,* Theſe Pſalms are of Divine Authority; *yet certainly it muſt be granted that as they are compoſed into Metre, there is a great deal of Humane Invention, and that none of the beſt in our common Tranſlation. But if it be enough to juſtifie the uſe of theſe* Pſalms, *that they are agreeable to thoſe of* Divine Authority, *tho' not juſt in the ſame words; why will not this juſtifie the uſe of thoſe* Prayers, *which are as agreeable to the* Holy Scriptures, *and often uſe the very ſame Expreſſions? Nay, I ſuppoſe you would not think it unlawful to ſing pious Hymns compoſed by able Men, in which there was nothing contrary to Scripture; and for what manner of Reaſon can you then refuſe to joyn in* Prayers, *againſt which there lies as little exception. But to conclude this, there are few of you, I ſuppoſe, but upon occaſion can joyn in ſome parts of* Common-prayer; *as ſometimes at the Burial of your Friends; ſometimes at the ſolemnizing of* Matrimony, *your own or others; and why then can you not with as good Conſcience joyn in the other parts, particularly in this which is uſed at the Adminiſtring of the* Holy Communion. *Eſpecially conſidering that this whole Office is generally lookt upon by the* Nonconformiſts, *ſo far as I have read or heard, as little liable to exception, as any other in the whole Book. Nor do I well remember, that ever I heard any Objection againſt the matter of it.*

Obj. (4.) *If yet any should Object*, That they are dissatisfied with the Ministers use of the Surplice in his Administring of the Lord's Supper.

Ans. (1.) *In a few words, I desire such to consider what appearance of a fault it can be, for* Ministers, *as well as other Professions of Men, to use distinct Garments peculiar to their Profession, when they are employ'd in any parts of the* Publick Worship *and* Service? *Whilst they do this meerly for Decency sake: for to that end are they appointed in our* Church, *being only stiled* Ornaments, *without a word said of any holiness in them more than in our common Garments, no nor any thing that I know of about their significancy.*

(2.) *If this be granted that they may wear a peculiar Habit then why not a* Surplice *as well as any other, the custom of the* Church *and the Commands of Authority having introduced it? Where lies the fault of it? in the colour, or the shape, or where? Why is not a white Garment as innocent and as lawful as a black one? What if Priests under the Law wore Linnen Garments, or what if* Popish *Priests wear them, what's that to us? Must we do nothing that they do, in matters of this nature? If they wear Woollen, must we therefore lay it aside? I wonder what Scripture or Reason can be brought for so absurd a fancy.*

(3.) *But lastly, Suppose there was a fault in the* Ministers *wearing of the* Surplice *(for which truly the pretence is very slender) yet what's this to the people, who wear it not? Can you think that his fault in this case will be charged upon* you? *Yes, you will say,* You hereby give your consent and approbation. *And why do you fancy so? It's not required of you as the condition of your Admittance to give your approbation. Nor does your coming hither it self do it. For we know the*

(a) 3

contrary, that you do not approve of it. And if you think it neceſſary for the diſcharge of your Conſciences, you may go before hand, and tell your Miniſter *as much, if that will ſatisfie you. It is here much what the ſame, as in offering your Children to* Baptiſm *after which you know they are to be ſigned with the ſign of the* Croſs. *Your deſire is only that they ſhould have* Chriſtian Baptiſm, *but as to the* Croſs, *if there be any ſin in it (which I think is beyond the wit of Man to prove) let him bear the blame who is guilty. You are not concerned therein. Here you may, if you think fit, freely declare your judgment to the Miniſter, only give him leave after that, to act according to his judgment, and there will be no hurt done.*

Object. 5. *Some perhaps may ſay and it is the laſt Objection I intend to take notice of)* That for themſelves they are ſatisfi'd with the lawfulneſs of all that's required, and could be well content to come to the Communion, only they fear they ſhall give offence to ſome weaker Brethren, who have not attain'd this ſatisfaction, whereas the Scripture forbids the giving offence to ſuch.

Anſ. (1.) *That Offence or Scandal which the* Scripture *eſpecially forbids as is commonly acknowledged is the doing any thing which may be an hurt to the Souls of our* Brethren, *any way drawing them into or confirming them in ſin, or diſcouraging them from their Duty. And this we are then chiefly warned againſt, when we may avoid it meerly by denying our ſelves in ſome things that are left to our own choice and liberty. But I ſee not how this reaches our preſent caſe, nor is it uſually taken in this ſenſe by thoſe of the people who make this Objection.*

(2.) *But in your ſenſe of the word, as it ſignifies a grief to your* Brother. *Pray conſider well whoſe plea-*

ſure and ſatisfaction are you moſt to conſult in this Caſe. I ſhould think you ought firſt to look at the Peace of your own Conſcience. For if you are ſatisfied with the lawfulneſs of what is required, how can you with a quiet mind neglect the publick performance of this weighty duty which our bleſſed Saviour *hath ſo expreſly enjoyned, and by which you honour him before the World, and do* ſhew forth his death till he come? *And will you neglect all this in complyance with the weakneſs and miſtakes of any of your fellow Creatures? Beſide this, do you not alſo diſobey and diſpleaſe both your* Magiſtrates *and* Miniſters, *either by a total neglect of this duty, or by doing it in private, in a way of Separation. And will you chuſe to grieve thoſe who are your Brethren, and ſomewhat more, your Superiours, by this your neglect, rather than diſpleaſe ſome private perſons, who indeed have no juſt cauſe of offence whilſt you do but your duty.*

(3.) *Again, by this means you do indeed take the direct courſe to offend your Brethren in the* Scripture *ſenſe; that is, to hurt their Souls; for you do hereby confirm thoſe weak perſons in their miſtakes, and in the Separation which they oft occaſion; and by your Example alſo tempt others to the ſame courſe, to ſlight and neglect the* Publick Communion. *Wherefore if you are once well ſatisfied your ſelves, endeavour the ſame for your Friends. If you cannot do that, yet enjoy your own freedom, and be not in bondage to other peoples Errors. Walk according to the light of your own Mind, and be not miſled by their ignorance. Look not upon it as a trivial matter; conſider what a reproach and diſhonour you caſt upon our* Publick Aſſemblies, *whilſt by your practice you declare them ſo corrupt and vile as not to be joyned with: paſſing as it were an heavy ſentence of* Excommunication *on the whole*

whole Congregation, *yea on all others in the land; Remember they have no good* Character *in* Holy Writ, *who cry to their Brethren*, Stand off, we are holier than you. *What Sentence is paſt on the* Phariſees *on this account, the* Goſpel *plainly acquaints us; whilſt we there read how our* Bleſſed Saviour ſhun'd not the Society of thoſe poor Publicans in order to their good, whom the others deſpiſed: *thereby at once giving us an Example both of* Humility *and* Charity. *Do not alledge that* you think your ſelves bound to ſeek out for a purer Society and purer Adminiſtrations, *whilſt there is nothing ſinful required of you as the condition of your* Communion *in all Ordinances with our* Church. *And therefore certainly there is no impurity contracted by communicating with it. If this be not enough to ſatisfie a Mans Conſcience, where ſhall he reſt? And tho' you may fancy that this, or that way of* Worſhip, *becauſe of ſome external Modes and Circumſtance for which you have a peculiar fondneſs, is more pure then what was in publick: Yet if upon ſuch accounts as theſe you break the Peace of the* Church, *and with-draw from the* Publick Aſſemblies, *then ſurely the way you engage in will be found to be impure, becauſe contrary to the* Word of God. *For where can you find in all that* Word *any precept or allowance given, that becauſe of a* Form *of* Prayer, Kneeling *at the* Communion, *&c.* you may Seperate from the Publick Worſhip, and from thoſe Miniſters whom the providence of God and a lawful Authority have ſet over you; and chuſe to your ſelves other Miniſters, and with them erect private Aſſemblies in oppoſition to the publick? *Surely there is no juſt cauſe for ſuch a Separation, and conſequently this may be juſtly ſtiled a* Schiſm, *an unlawful diviſion and a great* Breach *of the* Churches Peace, *which is*

moſt

most strictly forbidden in Holy Scripture, *and hath ſtill been look't on as a very hainous ſin by* Holy Men *in all Ages; being commonly attended with a world of miſchievous Conſequences, too many to be here ſo much as mention'd. That of the* Apoſtle *is very comprehenſive,* where Envying and Strife is (*the moſt natural effects of* Schiſm) there is confuſion and every evil work, *Jam.* 3. 16. *And of this our own Experience in theſe days, will ſcarce give us leave to doubt. Wherefore we ought to avoid the very appearance of ſo great an Evil. And ſure it may the more reſtrain us from any inclinations to a Separation, if we conſider what is commonly urged by* Writers *on this Subject, and I think is a very great Truth; that they who ſeparate from the* Publick Worſhip *of our* Church, *from* Prayers *and* Sacraments, *on ſuch Accounts as are before mentioned, they muſt by the ſame reaſon ſeparated from all* Chriſtian Churches *that have been from the* Apoſtles *time, down to our days: Yea, and from all the* Reformed Churches *that are now in the World. For both one and the other, have had either the very ſame things, or thoſe which are of the ſame nature, and therefore as liable to exception. And ſhould not a ſober Man mightily ſuſpect thoſe* Principles, *which if they be ſtrictly purſued and put in practice, would oblige him thus to ſeparate from the whole* Chriſtian Church, *that is and has been in all Ages. Yea, I think I may ſafely add further, that there is not any one party of what denomination ſoever of thoſe who ſeparate from us, but they themſelves have ſomewhat amongſt them, in their way of* Worſhip, *as liable to exception, as thoſe things which they ſcruple in ours. In ſeveral Inſtances they will all be found to make uſe of their own prudence in determining*

mining ſome particular Circumſtances, which are left undetermined in the Word of God, *and for which they can ſhew no expreſs Precept. Why then ſhould they condemn that in others, which they allow in themſelves? They have, I am ſure, no more command for Praying without a Form, than we for Praying with one, (I think not ſo much) nor for ſitting at the* Communion, *than we have for kneeling; with a multitude more Inſtances that might be given. So that for the ſame reaſon* any of thoſe call'd *Presbyterians* ſeparate from us, the *Independants* may ſeparate from them; the *Anabaptiſts* from the *Independents*, and the *Quakers* from the *Anabaptiſts*, each pretending greater Purity than the other, and quarrelling with what they call Humane Inventions. *And yet after all, I doubt not but the* Quakers *themſelves, who would ſeem to ſtrip* Religion *ſtark naked, of all that people ignorantly call* Popiſh *and* Superſtitious; *yet even theſe have their own* Forms *and* Ceremonies; *yea, many of them, and that ſuch ſilly ones, as have nothing of Reaſon no more than* Scripture *to be alledged for them. And this after they have pretended to ſuch a* Spiritual Diſpenſation, *that they have thrown aſide* Baptiſm *and the* Lord's Supper, *as External Carnal things, tho moſt expreſly commanded by our* Bleſſed Saviour; *and to this extravagance have they run, whilſt they are ſtill for a more thorow* Reformation, *and purer* Adminiſtrations. *All which may well oblige and perſwade us to reſt ſatisfied in our* Communion *with that* Church *where the* Word *and* Sacraments *are ſo purely Adminiſtred, that without ſubmitting to any ſinful conditions we may partake of them; and this priviledge through God's ſingular favour, we may enjoy in this our*

Church

Church, *if in any other in the whole World. How then can we justifie a Separation from it? How carefully should we avoid the first beginnings of it, whatever has a tendency to it? But its time to leave this Argument.*

Only before I conclude, tho' I have already exceeded the due bounds of a Preface, *let me take the freedom, earnestly to beseech you who are any way inclined or tempted to this Separation, seriously to consider, and impartially to follow the things that make most for* Peace, *for the peace of* Church *and* State, *and for the peace of your own Consciences. In order thereto, calmly and soberly weigh the Arguments that have here or any other where been offered to you: And if your doubts still remain, address your selves to those who have care over your Souls for fuller satisfaction, and receive their Directions and Advice, without prejudice or partiality. And withal, yea, above all your other endeavours, beg of* God, *the* Father of Lights, *the* God *of* Truth *and* Peace, *that he would grant you the knowledge of the truth, and direct you by his* Holy Spirit *into the ways of* Peace *and* Holiness, *which are agreeable to his own most blessed Will. And let these Prayers be put up with minds sincerely disposed to do the Will of* God, *in all things, so far as you know it; in singleness and simplicity of Heart, aiming wholly at the* Glory *of* God, *the Interest of* Religion, *the welfare and happiness of your own immortal Souls.*

And be not, I beseech you, so weak as to imagine that God is so much pleased or honoured with this or that Mode and Way of Worship, *as he is with* Humility *and* Charity, *with a peaceable and quiet* Submission *to the lawful commands of our* Superiors. *And in these does the purity and power of* Religion

much

much more conſiſt than in any ſuch external Circumſtances. By our conteſts about theſe things, it's moſt apparent that Religion *receives infinite prejudice, eſpecially conſidering with what unchriſtian heats they are commonly managed.*

The Zeal which ſhould be laid out upon the weightier matters of Law *and* Goſpel, *is too often unprofitably ſpent upon this,* Mint, Anniſe, *and* Cummin: *And yet on all ſides, Men are too prone to flatter themſelves with an opinion of their being very Devout and Religious, becauſe of their zeal for, or againſt theſe things, whilſt little of* Piety *and* Holineſs *appears in their Life and Converſation. As if they had never read,* That the Kingdom of God conſiſts not in Meats and Drinks, but in Righteouſneſs and peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, in the love of God, and our Brethren, and in humble obedience to our Rulers, for Gods ſake. *Whilſt we ſhould be* provoking one another to love and to good Works, *we rather provoke to Wrath and Hatred, by reviling, cenſuring, and back-biting. And thus the true* Chriſtian Spirit *of* Charity, *with all the bleſſed fruits of it, wherein the very life and eſſence of* Religion *conſiſts, is almoſt baniſht out of the World. And little love to God himſelf, appears amongſt us, except our hatred of one another may paſs for a ſign of it: Yet all this we are apt to ſhelter under the honourable name of zeal for* Religion. This is oft made a Cloak, both for wicked Actions, and for unruly Paſſions. *But ſuch a bitter zeal it is, as St.* James *deſcribes,* James 3. 14, *&c. Which is accompanied with* Strife and Envy, and is Earthly, Senſual, and Deviliſh. *Whilſt true Zeal is that which proceeds from Piety, is attended with Charity, and managed with Moderati-*

on

on and Prudence. It neither resists the Magistrate, *nor hurts our* Brethren, *nor disquiets our own Minds, but like the* Wisdom from above (*there afterward described*) is pure and peaceable, gentle and easie to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits. *It inclines us to* love the good, and delight in them; to pity the bad and do all we can to mend them: *These are the Fruits of it. But how rarely are these to be found in the World.* Whilst Iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold, *but in their Contentions they are over hot.* And all this Strife and Division are we guilty of, *whilst we all seem sensible of the danger we are in from a common Enemy. To whom we now expose our selves as a Scorn and Derision by our Vilifying and Reproaching of one another, and to whom we may become a very easie Prey, by turning every Man his hand against his Brother:*

If we bite and devour one another, may we not fear to be consumed one of another; *whilst our Adversaries behold the pleasant Spectacle, and soon may enjoy the Rich Fruits of our Feuds and Follies. This we all seem to apprehend, and thus we frequently complain. and yet how little is done by us to prevent our danger, and to remove the cause of these complaints.*

If it be said, What can private persons (*for to such am I speaking*) do to this purpose? *Very much certainly, through Gods Blessing, might we do: If all of us, in the first place,* would enter into the serious consideration of our ways, humble our selves before God, for our own particular sins (*instead of censuring and accusing of others*) reform and amend our own Lives, and entirely devote our selves to the service of God and his Son Jesus,

in such a course of Piety, Righteousness, Sobriety, and Universal Goodness, as we stand obliged to by our Profession of Christianity, and by our Sacramental Vows both in Baptism, and at the Holy Communion. *This is that* Reformation *toward which every man may do somewhat; which is so far from giving any disturbance to the publick Peace, that indeed it doth mightily conduce to our present settlement and security, as well as to our future eternal happiness. For by this means* Almighty God *will be at peace with us, and will afford us his favour and protection.* And if God be for us, what need we fear who is against us? *How easily can he turn the hearts of our Enemies, or weaken their hands and frustrate all their Devices? Yea, by this means we should certainly become more generally inclinable to peace with one another. True* Religion *renders Men of a mild and peaceable, of a yielding and benign temper. It sweetens their Nature, and subdues their passions, and mortifies those lusts, from whence there come Wars and Fightings amongst them; such as Pride and Covetousness, Riot, and Luxury, Wrath and Malice, Cruelty and Revenge: for where these make a tumult and disorder in the breasts of Men, they are not like to have peace with themselves, nor with their Neighbours. And what good would such a peace do, if it could be obtain'd, whilst we should still be at enmity with God?* Nor is there much likelyhood that the Enemies of God should be any great Friends to Church or State. *Very violent they may be for their carnal Interests, very hot and zealous for a Party or an Opinion, full of rage and fury against those that differ from them, but they are never like to be instruments of* Peace, *whilst they are not Lovers of* Holiness; *how loudly*

soever

ſoever ſome of them may call for Reformation, *and others for* Uniformity. And what a nauceous fulſom thing is it to hear the Atheiſtical and Profane crying out for a Reformation of this and that in Church and State, whilſt they will not be perſwaded to reform their own Lives, which a thouſand times more concerns them? *As if theſe Men had any true zeal for* Religion, *whoſe lives are a perfect Defiance and Contradiction to it. Nor is it much better, I confeſs, to hear thoſe Men vehemently urging Conformity to the* Laws *of the* Church, *who themſelves live in no manner of Conformity to the Laws of* Chriſt, *the Head of the* Church. *As if a Man who is an open Rebel againſt his* Prince, *ſhould be angry at another for not obeying an inferior* Magiſtrate. *But would we all in the firſt place agree to be Pious and Holy, there would be much more hope of our Agreement in leſſer matters. For Holineſs is the Centre wherein we muſt all unite, if ever an Union to any good purpoſe be effected amongſt us. What would it profit us to be all joyn'd to one* Church, *and to be ſeparate from* Chriſt? *To uſe the ſame* Prayers, *and to have no true* Devotion? *To frequent the ſame* Sacraments, *and not perform our Vows? Such an external ſhadow and appearance of Unity, without an inward Principle, will neither be very durable nor uſeful. But when we become United in the love of God and true Goodneſs, then are we like to live in Unity and godly Love. When we are acted and governed by the ſame ſpirit of truth and holineſs, then are we like to retain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace and in Righteouſneſs of life. Then will our little differences either vaniſh of themſelves or be more eaſily accommodated, or managed with meekneſs and lowlineſs, with* Chriſtian Moderation

deration *and mutual forbearance, such as becomes the* ~~Example~~ *of the* Bleſſed Jeſus, *who have all one* Father, *one* Lord, *one* Spirit, *one* Faith, *one* Baptiſm, *and live in hope of the ſame* Eternal Glory. Diſciple

Thus in the firſt place giving up our ſelves unto God, as his faithful and obedient Servants, next let us ſee to render unto Cæſar *the things that are his, and ſhew that we* Fear God *by our* Honouring of the King, *as God's* Vice-gerent. *Let us then as Subjects of the ſame Prince, Inhabitants of the ſame Kingdom, all whoſe Intereſts are in the ſame bottom, let us all render to our* Dread Soveraign *that Homage and Obedience, that Honour and Reverence, to which we are moſt deeply engaged by all the bonds of Reaſon and Religion, by our Oaths and Vows, by the light of Nature and the expreſs Laws of God in the* Old Teſtament *and the* New. *Let us remain well ſatisfied with our private Station, keep in our Sphere, have great regard to the publick peace,* Study to be quiet, and every Man do his own buſineſs. *Let us carefully avoid all uncharitable Surmiſes and Suſpicions, all bold and ſawcy Cenſures and reproachful Reflections upon our* Rulers *and their proceedings, and do our utmoſt, to preſerve all due Veneration and Honour for the* King's Perſon *and* Government, *obeying his Laws, affectionately praying for his Welfare and Happineſs, and for the* peace *of our* Jeruſalem, *both of* Church *and* State, *joyning alſo our Endeavours to our Prayers, that* under him we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.

To this end, Laſtly, Let us all, as Members *of the ſame* Church, *who profeſs the ſame holy* Chriſtian Religion (*and that as Reformed from the Innovations and Corruptions of* Popery) *laying aſide all ſinful Animoſities and Prejudices, and* (*to the utmoſt of our power*)

all our groundless doubts and scruples, let us, I say, humbly and affectionately joyn together in the solemn publick Worship and Service of God. *Let us here receive the* Sincere Milk of the Word, *whether Read or Preached*, that we may grow thereby. *Let us here joyn in the same common* Supplications *and* Prayers, *which are made to God alone in the Name of* Christ, *for things agreeable to his Will, wherein we are all concerned, and to which therefore, we may all most readily say* Amen. *Would we thus with* one Mind, and one Mouth glorifie God *whom we call* Our Father; *this surely would still put us in mind that we are* Brethren, *and so engage us to live in brotherly love and kindness. All Society and Entercourse with each other, tho' it be in matters of Trade and common Converse, does naturally tend to beget Friendliness and Good will; how much more will Society and Conjunction in the duties of* Religion *and* Holy Worship *have that good Effect? But more especially Men do signifie and keep up mutual Friendship and Kindness in common Conversation by their Eating and Drinking together. And therefore above all, let us see duly to prepare our selves, and come together with great forwardness and alacrity to this* Holy Feast, the Supper of our Lord, *which he graciously prepared for the Entertainment of his Followers. To this* Feast *of* Charity, *let us come both to express and encrease our Charity one to another, as well as our love and thankfulness to our* God *and* Saviour; *this being one great end of its appointment, and which we are plainly taught by all that we here do, by what we see and what we remember (as is more fully shewn in the Book it self.) Here we are entertained at the same Table as Children of the same Family, and as we* partake of the same Bread, *so are we* to become one Body

Body and one Bread. *Whilſt we drink of the ſame Cup, we are to* Drink into one Spirit, *by which* Spirit we were Baptized into one Body. *as the* Apoſtle *ſpeaks.* 1 Cor. 12. 13. *But eſpecially whilſt we ſeriouſly conſider what it is that we ~~were~~ here commemorate, even an inſtance of the greateſt Charity that ever was ſhewn in the World; ſurely this or nothing will fill us with Bowels of Love and Charity to our Brethren. Behold, we have here the Son of God ſet before us bleeding and dying for vile Sinners, even for us that were Rebels and Enemies that he might make us the Friends of the moſt high God and ſave us from the Wrath to come. Let us hear him on the Croſs praying for his Murderers,* Father forgive them, they know not what they do. *Yea ſee him there ſhedding his precious Blood for thoſe wretched Men, whoſe hands were imbrewed in it. And ſhall not this great Example have a mighty effect upon us? Have we received ſuch kindneſs from our Maſter, and ſhall we not ſhew all we can to our Fellow ſervants? Seeing alſo what we ſhew to them for his ſake, he takes it as done to himſelf. His Spirit is grieved and his Wounds even bleed afreſh, by the Diviſions of his Members amongſt themſelves; and by their harſhneſs and uncharitableneſs one towards another: Shall we thus requite the Lord for his loving kindneſs? God forbid. Shall not that moſt precious Blood, which was ſhed to reconcile God and Man, reconcile us all one to another? Did Chriſt ſo love us all as to die to make us happy, and ſhall we hate one another, and delight in each others Miſery? Was this Blood of ſo much value with God, as to appeaſe his Wrath and render him willing to be at peace with us; and ſhall it not ſoften all our hearts, allay our paſſions, extinguiſh our unnatural heats, and enflame us with a warm and vi-*

gorous

gorous love to our God and Saviour, and to all mankind especially to our Christian Brethren? *Yea, shall not the Death of Christ have this effect upon us, when we remember that he died not only as an* Atonement, *but as an* Example *which we all are bound to imitate, that as he* laid down his life for us, so we should be ready to do the same for our Brethren? *Especially when he hath also told us, that* Faith working by Love, *is the great condition of our sharing in the benefits of his Death; that we shall never be forgiven except we forgive, nor shall be own'd as his* Disciples, *except we love one another. Let us remember, that* Christ our Passover is Sacrificed for us, and let us keep this Feast not with the leavened Bread of Malice, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth; *even with sincere and fervent love to God and Man. But 'tis time to conclude. That the Death of Christ may be frequently and seriously remembred in this holy manner, and to these blessed ends at the* Communion, *is the design of this* Book. *And that all good* Christians *may with full satisfaction of mind, frequent the* Communion *in our publick* Assemblies, *is the design of this* Preface. *And that solid Piety, and universal Charity, with Unity and Concord both in Religious Offices, and in our whole Conversation, may be every where effectually promoted, is the earnest desire of the Author, and shall by God's Grace be the business of his life. Let the* Reader *heartily say, that it shall be his also. And to all our honest Endeavours in our several places for the promoting of Peace and Holiness, may Almighty God give his* Blessing *for Christ's sake.* Amen.

CHAP. I.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction, lamenting the ignorant Vulgars Contempt of their Salvation, and ſhewing the deſign of this Treatiſe

THE bleſſed God, who in theſe laſt days hath ſpoken to us by his Son, and more fully and clearly revealed the way to Life and Immortality, which Chriſt hath brought to light, hath abundantly manifeſted his infinite Wildom and Goodneſs; in ſuiting and accommodating his Commands and Inſtitutions, to the meanneſs of our Capacities; and, as a God who knows our frame, hath ſo fitted himſelf and the Revelations of his Will, with a reſpect to our weakneſs, that nothing but affected ignorance, and meer wilfulneſs, can keep out the underſtanding of what he hath taught us, or hinder the performing of what he commands us.

The Doctrines of the Goſpel, which are of neceſſity to be believed in order to Salvation, and upon which an holy life is built, are few and plain, which we may find ſumm'd up in our Creed. As for the precepts which are given to be the rule of our life, how eaſie are they to be known and remembred, how exceeding reaſonable in themſelves, and moſt agreeable to our rectified Natures, and apparently tending to the unſpeakable advantage of particular Perſons, Families, Towns, and Common-wealths: the Goſpel being deſigned, not only to bring Men to Glory and Pleaſure hereafter, but to better the World at preſent, and to make this Earth a kind of type and ſhadow of Heaven; and ſo it would be, if Men were but more generally brought under the power and influence of the Chriſtian Religion, which doth not only forbid thoſe ſins which are deſtructive to the happineſs of Societies and ſingle perſons, as the Laws and Religion of the Heathens might alſo do; but ſtrikes at the very heart of wickedneſs, and gives the ſureſt directions and beſt helps, for the utter removal of the

cause and root of all disorders in the world, which it would be beside my purpose at present to speak of. None have cause now to complain, that they know not what to do to obtain eternal life, since he that runs may read his Duty: to love God above all, and our neighbour as our selves, to do as we would be done unto, to repent of all our sins, and betake our selves to the mercies of God through his Son Christ Jesus for a pardon; to be humble, holy, chaste and temperate; is any of this difficult to be understood? Have we not a plain word, directing us how to lead the whole course of our life, And have we not a Monitor within us, the Spirit of God by our Consciences in most cases, telling us how we should behave our selves? The sum of all is comprehended in our Baptismal Covenant, *to renounce the Devil and all his Works, the World, with its Pomp and Vanities, the Flesh, and the Lusts thereof, and to be devoted to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.* And as our Duty is easie to be known, so it is not difficult to be done, where there is first a willing mind; for indeed in this is comprehended all, to be unfeignedly willing to be such as God would have us, and to do all that he bids us. So that none can excuse himself for his disobedience, which is nothing else but obstinacy or gross negligence. And though of our selves we are poor weak Creatures; yet through the almighty Grace that is offered to our assistance, we may be enabled to do all things needful for our happiness, and those weaknesses that cleave to us, which we allow not our selves in, but strive against and bewail, we are assured through the merits of our precious Saviour, shall never be laid to our charge.

And as the great truths and duties of our Religion are thus plain and easie, so the positive institutions, whereby I mean the Sacraments of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, are few and clear; being neither burthensome to be practised, nor the meaning of them hard to be understood, doth not that form of words, which Christ hath enjoyned to be used in Baptism, whereby we are solemnly received into the number of professed Christians, sufficiently shew the meaning of it? Namely, that we are hereby consecrated and given up to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And doth not our being Baptized with Water, very plainly hold forth our washing and cleansing from the stains and pollutions of defiled Nature, and from the guilt of sin, by

by the blood and Spirit of Christ? And who knows not, that the Lord's Supper is for remembrance of Jesus Christ that died for us? The breaking of the Bread, and pouring forth of the Wine, how fitly and evidently do they represent to us, that his Body was broken, and his Blood shed for us? And the Elements of Bread and Wine, which we commonly use to nourish and refresh us, do naturally signifie that strength and comfort which we receive from Christ, as I shall hereafter shew at large.

Since then the Truth of our Religion are so evident, the Duties so reasonable and excellent, the Sacruments so easie, so few, and so exceeding profitable, may it not well be expected, that all who profess themselves owners of that Religion which Jesus Christ hath taught and establish'd, should be well acquainted with these weighty truths, diligent in the practice of their Duty to their Maker and Saviour, and to one another; and most devout and serious in the observation and use of these holy Sacraments, and constant in their attendance upon all Ordinances, as publick Prayer and Preaching, whereby they may be instructed and enabled to know and do the will of him that sent them into the World, But alas, alas, to the dishonour of God and our profession, and to the grief of all that long after the advancement of true goodness in the World, by sad experience we find the quite contrary even in this our Nation, that we look no further. God forbid that I should go about to disparage the glorious Fruits of our Reformation from *Popish* Ignorance and Superstition; no, blessed and for ever praised be our God, for that unspeakable mercy to this unworthy Land; for the happy effects whereof, doubtless, thousands of Souls are praising him in Glory, and thousands more yet on Earth, have cause to be infinitely thankful for that clear light which visited this corner of the Earth, when sunk into little less than an *Ægyptian* Darkness; so that I verily believe there is no Nation under the Sun, where there are greater numbers of knowing hearty Christians, who walk agreeable to the Gospel-rule, such that would be owned and approved by Christ himself and his Apostles, were they now amongst us, and will be at the day of their appearance before him. But having said this to prevent exception and mistake, give me leave to resume my complaint, that still there are so many that are in Darkness in the midst of Light, and that walk *as in Darkness, not as Children of the*

Light. Notwithſtanding the means of knowledge, multitudes remain in groſs ignorance, and are unacquainted even with the great Foundation-Truths of the Goſpel; and can it then be otherwiſe, but that they ſhould be vicious, careleſs, and worldly? And many who have a ſuperficial knowledge of their Duty, and confeſs it's beſt to be careful in doing of it, yet are themſelves wilful and groſs neglecters of it, and live in open violation of God's holy Laws. Many there are that can talk religiouſly, and are ready in the Scriptures, that yet will not by any means be brought to forſake thoſe ſins, which they find God's Word every where condemns, nor will they ſet themſelves to live ſuch an holy ſerious life, which is again and again ſo expreſly and earneſtly urged upon them. As for the Sacraments, though moſt are careful to bring their Children to be baptized, yet I pray God it be not more out of Cuſtom than Conſcience; for ſome of theſe can give no tollerable account of the reaſon of that Ordinance, nor why they would have their Children partake of it; only as they ſee their Neighbours do, ſo do they. But yet there are far fewer, who make any Conſcience of informing their Children what a ſtrict Covenant they are entred into; how they are related and ſolemnly engaged to God; for alas, can we expect Parents ſhould teach their Children to walk as becomes thoſe that are in Covenant with God, when they themſelves live rather like Rebels to his Majeſty, than faithful Subjects?

As for the Lord's Supper (which I intend to make the ſubject of my following Diſcourſe) how ſadly is it neglected in many places; or elſe ruſht upon inconſiderately and careleſly, as if it was but a matter of courſe, and no ſuch dangerous thing to receive it unworthily, as Scripture aſſures us that it is. How many Hundreds, yea, Thouſands, are there in both City and Country, who make no Conſcience at all of coming to the Table of the Lord? Perhaps they may come once a Year, and ſcarce that. Nay, many go from one Year to another, and never appear there: As if they acknowledg'd not they had a Saviour Died for them, or as if he had not bid them thus to remember his Death, or as if his Death were not worth the remembring. Oh, Careleſs, Stupid Sinners, what have you got to take up your thoughts and minds, that Chriſt himſelf is thus forgotten by you? You can think well enough of your Children and Friends, yea, of your Cows and Sheep, and your very Swine,

and

and must Christ have no room in your thoughts or memory? Do these indeed deserve more love than he? Have they done more for you, than he hath done? Or can they do more than he is able farther to do, and willing also, if your wretched Obstinacy did not prevent him? I know you can say, many of you, that he deserves not to live, who can forget Christ, and that you do indeed remember him, and take him for your only Saviour; and will pretend that you have God always in your mind, when you are about your work, or upon the way, and you think we must take your word for't, because we know not your Hearts, and cannot disprove you; but if one may judge by your carriage, you manifest nothing less. If one follow you from Morning till Night, he will scarce hear one serious word come out of your Mouths; you spend not half an hour in a day in Prayer, either with your Families, or alone; plain enough we can hear you Swear and Curse, and take God's Holy Name in vain, but scarce ever so much as once to mention him with reverence. Whatever Company you light into, you are still talking Foolishly and Vainly, or else only of your worldly affairs, but nothing that concerns the Service of God, and the Salvation of your Souls. But for many of you, I need no other evidence against you, than your gross neglect of this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. If this Paper fall into the hands of any such, (and I hope God will direct it into their Hands; for it was for such that I did chiefly intend it:) If I say, thou who art reading these Lines, be guilty of neglecting this Ordinance of Christ from one Year to another, when thou hast frequent Oportunities and Invitations to partake of it; let me ask thee how thou hast the Face to say, thou remembrest Jesus Christ, when thou wilt not do such a small thing as he enjoyns thee to do in remembrance of him? Never taking care to prepare thy self and come to his Holy Table. Canst thou remember him, and yet forget his Command? And absent thy self from those who meet together to Celebrate his remembrance, at an Ordinance appointed by Christ himself for that very purpose? Ah: Poor Creatures, that you did but well know your selves, and your own necessities, and concernments, then could you never be so unmindful of Jesus Christ; you would as soon forget your daily Bread. Oh! Did you well know what he hath done for you, and under what engagements you

ſtand to him, you would ſooner forget your deareſt Friend, who had ſaved you from Death, and daily fed you, and Cloathed you, and kep'd you Alive; for indeed this, and much more than this, do you owe to the Redeemer of *Mankind*. Oh! That you would but believe and conſider, what glorious unſpeakable Treaſures of Love and Goodneſs he hath purchaſed for, and will beſtow upon you, if you will accept them upon his terms, and then you would no more forget him, then you would forget your Prince or Landlord, from whoſe bounty you were in daily expectation of a plentiful Eſtate. And if you would but ſee to get your ſelves well informed of the Nature of this Holy Ordinance, diſtinctly and clearly to apprehend the reaſon and uſe of it, and what priviledges and bleſſings are contained in, repreſented and ſealed by it; I dare ſay you would more long to partake of it than of the moſt delicious Banquet, or ſumptuous Feaſt that ever was prepared. But what do I talk of? Who can perſwade carnal, ſenſual, ſtupid Creatures to believe that there is any ſubſtance, any worth in thoſe things that their ſenſes cannot reach to? What care they for that, which no way tends to the Pampering and pleaſing of the Fleſh? Give me leave, before I come to what I principally deſign, a little to lay open the wretched careleſneſs of the generality of Men, and briefly hint at the cauſe; that they may be aſhamed of themſelves when they ſee their Pictures and Deſcription, and ſo may ſeek out for the Cure of their Diſtempers.

Who would not, by the lives of moſt conjecture that they thought themſelves ſent into the World, on purpoſe to get food and raiment, and to make proviſion for the fleſh; and that they had reaſon given them for nothing elſe, but to be more witty and politick in carrying on their worldly deſigns? And how well would it be for them at the laſt, if thoſe ſouls ſhould have the greateſt reward, which were moſt loving to the body, moſt ſolicitous for its welfare, and did toil moſt in its ſervice: But what an heavy doom will light on them, if they muſt hereafter fare (as for certain they muſt) according as they imployed themſelves in ſeeking their own proper happineſs, in the pleaſing and ſerving of the great God. Oh the ſtrange folly and bruitiſhneſs of theſe Men, who are ſo forward of themſelves, to ſeek out after any thing which they believe makes for their temporal good; and yet will not by any means be drawn or driven to that, which is indeed for their ſpiritual and eternal good,

yea,

yea, and their temporal too, ſo far as may conſiſt with theſe. As if when they are contriving and working for the body, then only they were about their own buſineſs; but when they are minding the matters of their ſouls, they were imploy'd for ſome body elſe, in works that will be of no uſe or advantage to them, when yet God himſelf hath told us, that in the matters of Religion, *If we are wiſe, we are wiſe for our ſelves.* Prov. 9. 12. But this comes to paſs, by reaſon of that ſottiſhneſs which inclines poor Creatures to judge of all things by their ſenſe, and to meaſure their goodneſs by their ſuitableneſs to the fleſh. This makes the whole Goſpel to be a meer riddle to them, and little more regarded, than a ſtrange ſtory; for it treats of ſpiritual inviſible things, wherein immortal Souls are concerned, and they forget that they have ſuch ſouls. To hear of ſpiritual food and raiment, *to put on Chriſt, and to feed upon him*, all which we meet with in the word, are myſteries, of which they are willing to be ignorant. To be *made glad with the light of God's Countenance, to have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, to be beautified, adorned, and enriched with graces and good works*, and the like expreſſions, are ſo dark and knotty, that they know not what to make of them: They account nothing beauty but what they can look on: nor bravery, which makes not a noiſe and ſhew in the world: They know no Raiment they need, but what they wear on their back, nor any food but that which they put into their bellies. That only do they account pleaſure, which they feel in their throats, or which is ſo groſs, that Horſes and Dogs have a ſhare in it as well as they; and nothing muſt paſs for Honour with them but having reſpect in the World; and that they count their chiefeſt Riches, which they put in their Purſes, and lay up in their Bags. And this ſame Blindneſs and Carnality, amongſt all other Miſchiefs that it does, occaſions the Contempt of that ſacred Appointment of Chriſt, the commemoration of his Death, by partaking of his Supper: For here's nothing provided to give that entertainment to greedy raging Senſualiſts which they covet and hunt after. It is indeed very well worthy our obſervation, that ſo far as our Senſes might be helpful to us in the ſervice of God, he hath graciouſly condeſcended to uſe ſuch means as might work upon and affect them, that thereby Faith it ſelf, our apprehenſion of thoſe things which we ſee not, may be quickned and advanced; which, as in

ſome

ſome other inſtances, ſo in this Sacrament eſpecially is made manifeſt: For here we have Crucified Chriſt plainly held forth to us, and the benefits we receive by him, are ſignified by thoſe material things, Bread and Wine, which we eat and drink. And thus far God hath made proviſion for ſenſe it ſelf, the more to excite and ſtir up our dull ſpirits; but ſo far as the pleaſing and humouring the ſenſes might be an hinderance to the Soul, God hath made no proviſion for them. Here's no ſuch pomp and gaudineſs, and outward ſplendor, as may gratifie wanton carnal minds. *Papiſts* may deviſe ſuch things (inſtead of Chriſt's Inſtitutions, which they ſteal away from the People) to the quenching of all true zeal and ſpiritual affection in God's ſervice; but the Goſpel warrants not any ſuch hurtful devices, and our Church doth juſtly reject them. Nor is here a feaſt of dainties to ſatisfie a luxurious Appetite, or feed an hungry belly. Here's food for the Soul indeed repreſented and convey'd by theſe Elements to the worthy Receiver; but the moſt are ſo ignorant of their greateſt concernments, that they never yet found ſuch a thing within them as a ſpiritual hunger. What, A Soul be hungry? How can that be? Alaſs, they have ſo much to do to ſupply the neceſſities of their Bodies, that they can't have while to regard their Souls. No, they may ſink or ſwim, ſtarve, and damn for them; for they have other matters to mind which they hold more neceſſary. Is it not a wonder what we read, *Matth.* 22. at the beginning, that when the King had made a Marriage for his Son, and prepared a Feaſt, and ſent forth his Servants to invite the Gueſts, they ſhould *make light of it*, and begin to frame Excuſes, that they had other buſineſs to do, and this and that way to go, and therefore could not come? What, not come to a Feaſt, to a ſumptuous Marriage-Feaſt? To a Feaſt made for the King's Son? And when Servants were ſent on purpoſe to invite them to it? Were not theſe ſtrange ſort of ſtubborn fooliſh Men, that would diſobey their own King, ſending them ſuch a courteous Meſſage as this? Reader, doſt thou not condemn them in thy own thoughts? Doſt thou not think thou would'ſt never have been ſo ſilly and obſtinate as they, if thou hadſt been ſo ſent unto? But for all thy thoughts, its well if thou prove not guilty of the very ſame fault thy ſelf. For what was the matter think'ſt thou, that theſe people would not come when they were invited? Why alas, there was no

ſuch

ſuch Fare made ready as they had a mind to. Be ſure had there been but ſuch good chear as would have fill'd their Bellies, they would have made haſte enough, and would have invented excuſes how to get in, rather than to ſtay away.

But this is a Parable, ſhewing what entertainment the moſt do give to the Goſpel, whereby we are invited not only to a Wedding-Feaſt, to be even Married our ſelves to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the everlaſting Son of the Father: And yet this Meſſage, the matchleſs mercy whereof may aſtoniſh Men and Angels, I ſay this Meſſage is ſlighted: *Men will not come to Chriſt that they may have life.* Adulterous Souls go after other Lovers, and will not be eſpouſed to the Lord of glory: *They ſee no form nor comlineſs in him why they ſhould deſire him.* They hear great commendations of him indeed, what an excellent glorious perſon he is, no leſs than the Son of God made Man, whoſe love was ſo great to Mankind, that he laid down his life for them, but in the mean time, *What has he?* What's to be got by him? What Eſtates will he ſettle on them? What Honours will he advance them to? What? Why they ſhall through him have their ſins pardoned and ſubdued, their hearts ſanctified, and at length ſhall be receiv'd into everlaſting Glory.—Nay, if this be all, they have no mind to come on, but when their conſent is deſired, they have ſome excuſe or other ready at hand; and either they will not come at all, or elſe not yet, or not ſo thorowly and heartily as they are commanded, and in ſuch a wilful refuſal of Grace do thouſands perſiſt and periſh. And though I ſuppoſe this foremèntioned Parable doth not directly and primarily belong to the Lord's Supper, yet it may by conſequence be very well applyed thereto: Since here is a Marriage-Feaſt of the King's Son; here are the great bleſſings and mercies of the Goſpel held forth and offered; and all who come duly prepar'd, and ſincerely diſpos'd to accept the ſame, ſhall be aſſur'd of them; and hither do God's Miniſters exhort all to come in the appointed regular way. And what's the effect of their Meſſage? *Why the muſt make light of it.* Hither to this Holy Table are People call'd to give up themſelves to God, to teſtifie the truth of their ſorrow for ſin, and to renew their reſolutions againſt it, and ſo to receive a ſealed Pardon, and a Title to life everlaſting; but for their parts they have no ſuch liking to theſe ſpiritual good things

which

which are so freely tendered them. The truth is, their sins as yet they are loath to leave; for they see no great hurt in them; nay, they think they find much good at present, and do not use to trouble themselves much with the thoughts of that mischief they may hereafter do them, and therefore they have no such high thoughts of Christ for his being able to mortifie and remove their Lusts, and so to save them from the misery these would bring them to. They can very hardly be perswaded, that there is any such excellency in an holy Life, that they should so speedily and solemnly resolve upon it. And though they can like well enough to go to Heaven when they must needs leave this World; yet they look upon that day so far off, that they are in no great haste of making sure their future happiness, but think it may be time enough to do that a great while hence. And can any Man wonder, if those who are no more sensible of any benefit they have by Christ, are very slack and negligent in a thankful remembrance of his death, and of those benefits which thereby we enjoy and hope for, which is the great end of celebrating this Sacrament? No marvel if such as these always find one excuse or other, to keep away from that which they have no more love to, and the necessity and advantage whereof, they are no more acquainted with. If there was but any matter of gain to be got by it, any thing which made for the flesh, we should need no such ado to get them thither. We may be sure, if the King should but proclaim that he would give six pence a-piece to all the poor throughout *London*, that would repair to *White-hall*, there would need nothing but the knowledge of it to get them together. O what running, and crowding, and craving would there be! He need not send any Messengers to beseech and perswade them to receive his Charity. But when the Soveraign Majesty of Heaven and Earth by his Heralds proclaims to all, *Ho every one that is willing, let him prepare himself, and come hither and receive an earnest of infinite and everlasting treasures*; there are few will accept the offer, as if it was of no value; and as if the Apostle was mistaken, when he prefers the *blood of Christ* before such *corruptible things as Silver and Gold*. Nay I'le warrant you, in those Parishes where you shall find so few at a Communion, did but any rich Man amongst them make a Feast, and invite the whole Town to it, you shall find but few stay at home. But now when God himself calls them

them to his Table, and there hath provided them food which came from Heaven, true Spiritual Manna, even the Body and Blood of Christ, which is Meat and Drink indeed; they find no great appetite to this Banquet. All the great words they hear of it work not with them: For in all such cases 'tis not other mens Words and Opinions that we judge by, but our own relish and feeling. And whilst men have got such corrupt dispositions, and carnal affections that they savour only those things which are gross and earthly like themselves, what wonder is it if they undervalue that which is so unsuitable to them, and in which they can feel no more taste than in the White of an Egg. A Swine prefers his own swill before the greatest Dainties that can be provided; and a voluptuous sinner that is wallowing in the mud of fleshly pleasures, would not willingly exchange Conditions with the Glorious Angels, that always behold the Face of God.

Oh whither is the Soul of man degenerated! into what a low and sad estate is it fain, that it finds sweetness in any thing rather than in that which is truly pleasant? How chearfully and contentedly can People set themselves to any thing rather than to that only work which God hath appointed them, even the *working out of their Salvation*? From morning to night they can follow their worldly business without complaining, and yet know not how to spend one day in seven, nor one half hour in a day in the service of God, for the saving of their own Souls. Oh what pains do many poor men take, only to get a livelihood in the World, and yet think everlasting life worth no regard or care at all: They can be content to spend their Thoughts, and Strength, and Time upon Vanity, *to lay out their money for that which is not Bread*, and to labour for the Wind; but when God saith, *Give me your hearts*, he is denied. If this careless Generation had but Houses and Lands, Money and Goods, proffered them on the same Terms that Heaven is, how greedily would they lay hold on them? If a rich man should say to them, *Love but this Gold more than the Dirt under your feet, and you shall have it*; O how quickly would they purchase it, and never think the condition hard! If the poor man was enjoyned to prefer Bread before a Stone, and to desire it more, and then it should be given him, do you think he would ever be without it? And yet when the Blessed God offers them ten thousand

times

times greater Mercies upon such Terms as these, they refuse them, as if they were required to do some great thing, for that which was not worth their Labour. What doth God command us, but to love himself more than empty Creatures? To value an everlasting Kingdom before the frail Comforts of this short Life? and yet we will not do it. He bids us but love our best part, even our Souls, more than these vile Bodies; and to take most care for that which deserves most, as being the more excellent. When he enjoyns us to fly from Sin, and imbrace Holiness; it is as if he would say, *Beware of that which will do you the greatest mischief, and close with that which will do you the most good; Accept of Liberty and Freedom, and do not lye in Prison and Fetters: Be in Health, and not in Sickness*; and yet men will not be perswaded. When God saith, prefer my pleasant Service, before the Bondage of the Devil, and thou shalt be happy for ever; he doth as it were say, *Be but heartily willing to accept of Happiness here, and thou shalt have it hereafter*; but the most are unwilling. And upon this it is that not only God, but all the World, yea, themselves, will for ever lay the blame of their Destruction, *by their resolvedness and wilfulness in the ways of sin they are merciless murderers of their own Souls.* The Devil may tempt, and the World may allure, but they cannot force them to sin. There is not one of all those Millions that perish, who can truly say, that he was unfeignedly willing to have sav'd himself, but could not. But as for those that perish from among Christians, they have least of all to plead in their own excuse: For they have been exhorted, and besought again and again, to put away their evil doings, to renounce their Lusts, and turn to the good ways of God, and yet they would not hearken. What though the Devil entic'd them to Wickedness, did not God's Spirit also move upon their Hearts, to have drawn them to Holiness? But they who knew not how to *resist the Devil* as they were commanded, could *resist and grieve, and offer despight to the Spirit of Grace.* Whilst they knew not how to reject nor get away from a sinful Companion, they could put off their Ministers and godly Friends with flat Denials, if not with Contempt and Jeers. What though the Flesh was craving for forbidden Fruit, unlawful Pleasures and Satisfaction? Yet did not Conscience contradict and check it? Why then should Flesh, which had no reason for its desires,

be

be hearkened to and obeyed, whilſt Conſcience, which is the Voice of God, muſt be ſlighted and ſilenced? Tell me, whoever thou art, that makeſt a Trade of ſin, and liveſt in the neglect of thy Duty to God that made thee, and keeps thee alive, not accounting it the buſineſs of thy life to ſerve and honour him, but goeſt from one day to another without the ſerious Thoughts of his glorious Majeſty, and all his wonderful Works and Mercies; thou who ſeeſt no need of hearing or reading God's Word, of conſtant Prayer, or receiving Sacraments, that puttеſt off the Thoughts of Death and Judgment, and art careleſs of making preparations for the ſame: Tell me I beſeech thee, what's the reaſon of ſuch a wretched ſinful courſe as this? Is it becauſe thou knoweſt no better? Waſt thou never told how thou oughteſt to behave thy ſelf? Did'ſt thou never hear who it is puts men upon ſin, and what wages they have for it at length? Didſt thou never read nor hear of a Saviour that came to call men to Repentance and Holineſs, and laid down his life to ſave all that will be his faithful Followers and Servants? It's very ſtrange indeed if thou haſt lived in any ſuch dark corner, that thou wert never acquainted with theſe matters; but it is moſt likely thou haſt heard them again and again, but all hath been to no purpoſe. What doſt thou not know who made thee? and why thou waſt made? There's few Children but can anſwer ſuch queſtions as theſe, and yet how few Men that conſider them, or that live as if they knew them!

There are indeed many to be found, eſpecially of the meaner ſort, who tell you they cannot read, nor are Book-learned, and therefore they hope God will hold them excuſed, and not require much of them, but yet theſe people have learned enough to look to their buſineſs in the world; and if they be ſick, they'll ſeek for help, or if they are wronged they'll look out for relief. And what have they not learning enough to know what they muſt do to be ſaved? Have they been idle and unwilling to learn ſo much as to read *Engliſh*; and do they think this will ſerve their turn to plead for their ignorance and neglect of Duty, and wilful Rebellions againſt God? What were they taught or commanded ſuch difficult things, that none but Scholars can underſtand or do them? They can tell, as ſimple as they are, that the light of the Sun is greater than the light of a Candle; that Gold is better than Braſs, that a King

is

is above a Conſtable; that its better to have an Eſtate of their own, which they ſhall enjoy as long as they live, than to be Tenants to another, to be turned out when he will. Do they know theſe things, & is it any harder to know that God who made all things, and put that goodneſs into them which they have, is better than all thoſe things which he made, and therefore ſhould be preferred before all Creatures? That he who is Lord of All, ſhould be obeyed above All; that to be like him, is better than to be like the Beaſts; that a certain everlaſting Glory is more worth than ſhort, uncertain comforts here below? Again, theſe men know well enough how to Eat and Drink, and to take heed of what might hurt their bodies; they could avoid the perſons and places that were infected; if the houſe was on fire they would run out of it, and call Neighbours to help to quench it; if they are upon the way, and are told of Quick-ſands and Quagmires, they can avoid them. And yet have they not learning enough to do good to their Souls, and to take heed of that which will deſtroy them for ever, and hearken to others that warn them of their danger? They can be diligent enough to pleaſe thoſe that do them good turns, and to beware of offending ſuch as can undo them; And yet do they account it ſuch an hard matter to love and pleaſe that God who hath given them all the mercies they ever enjoyed, and to take heed of provoking him to anger, *who can kill both body and ſoul, and caſt them into Hell?* Yea, further, let thoſe very people that cannot read, have a Paper given them, that tells them how to cure any Diſeaſe they are troubled with, they can go to a Neighbour, and get him to read it to them, and they can mark it ſo diligently as to follow its Directions. Or if they be in any trouble about their Eſtates, they can carry their Deeds and Evidences to a Lawyer, and pray him to peruſe them, and tell them how the caſe ſtands with them. And what, could they get no body to read the Bible, or ſome good Book to them, that might direct them in the way to Salvation? Or could they not have hearken'd carefully to their Miniſter, whilſt he was telling them what they muſt do? Or might they not have gone to him in private, and deſired particular inſtructions for their ſouls? Nay, there are few Families of the pooreſt, but one or other amongſt them can read; and might they not have taken ſome ſpare time, and have read together, and diſcourſed

one

one with another about the ſtate of their Souls, and what was to be done in order to everlaſting happineſs? The plain truth is, there are a few but can ſhew diligence and skill enough in any worldly trifle, that they think does at all concern them; but (as I hinted before) they are ſo inſenſible of any advantage that's to be got by minding the things of Religion, that they diſregard them as matters of no worth or conſequence. For I cannot imagine whence this ſtrange and damnable careleſneſs ſhould come, but that firſt of all, men forget that they have ſouls which will never die, but muſt live for ever in another World, either in joy or torment, according as they behaved themſelves in this: For certainly, the ſound belief, and frequent ſober conſideration of the true nature of the Soul, is the great foundation and ſupport of ſeriouſneſs in Religion, the great deſign whereof is to help this immortal Soul to an happineſs ſuited to its Nature. Wherefore, if the ſoul it ſelf be forgotten, how can it otherwiſe be but God will be forgotten alſo, and the Duty we owe to him neglected? For though if we were ingenuous, his mercies to our bodies might engage us to love and ſerve him, and the moſt carnal Men may ſo far remember God, as to look for health and wealth, and outward comforts from him, yet this cannot bring them to any heartineſs in Religion, which conſiſts very much in denying the fleſh. and thinking meanly of all things here below; and therefore no Man can ſerve God as he ought, but he who believes that he rewards his diligent Servants with an everlaſting Happineſs in the fruition of himſelf: for nothing but the hopes of this can bear out Men in thoſe difficulties of ſuffering and obedience which they may be call'd to. But if Men have no regard to their Souls, neither will they take any heed to pleaſe God, nor make it their buſineſs to get to Heaven hereafter, which is nothing elſe but a ſtate of happineſs principally prepared for a reaſonable ſoul in the full enjoyment of God; neither will they take care to prevent their falling into Hell, which is that ſtate of miſery whereinto *they that forget God are turned*, and chiefly appointed for the puniſhment of the Soul. And hence it will unavoidably follow, that they will undervalue the work of Redemption, and diſregard the Lord Jeſus, who wrought this work in behalf of the Sons of Men, to recover their Souls to God, to purchaſe the pardon of ſin, and enable them ſincerely to pleaſe God,

ſo

ſo to prevent their Damnation, and bring them to eternal glory. And if they have no eſteem for Chriſt, then needs muſt they ſlight the Word and Sacraments whereby they ſhould be brought to acquaintance with him, to be intereſted in, and related to him, and to receive the Communications of Grace from him.

Now though there are few that will acknowledge themſelves guilty of ſuch ignorance of themſelves, ſuch contempt of God and Glory, and of Chriſt, the way thereto, yet their actions do too plainly ſhew it. For certainly if they had any true knowledge of their own ſouls, they could not but take more pains to ſave them than they do, even out of love to themſelves; when as now they never in all their lives, many of them, are ſo much as once brought ſeriouſly to ask the queſtion, *how they ſhould do to be ſaved?* No, nor ever withdrew themſelves into private for an hours time on ſet purpoſe to conſider what their ſpiritual condition is, and how they ſtand related to God, whether as friends or enemies, and whither they muſt go when they depart out of this life. And tell me then, do theſe people indeed remember to any purpoſe that they have ſouls that muſt either be ſaved or damned for ever? What though they may ſometimes hear Sermons, or read the Bible, yet do they uſe when they come home, or when they have laid aſide their Books, ſoberly to think of what they have read or heard? Do they conſider how it concerns them? Do they examine themſelves by the Word, and apply it home to their own Conſciences, and guide their lives by it? Do they regard it as that by which they muſt ſhortly be judged? And though they may ſometimes put up a Prayer to God, yet do they perform this duty as feeing any need of it, taking any delight in it, or as expecting any good from it? Do they beforehand think what they ſtand in need of, and ſo pray to God for a ſupply of their wants, not only of their Bodies, but Souls, in as good earneſt as they can ask their Neighbour for any thing they lack. And in the very act of praying have they any awe or ſenſe of God upon their Spirits, as they would have, if they were putting up a Petition to a Prince or Judge? And do they mind what they have been about when they come from the Duty? Do they carefully wait for an anſwer of their Prayers, and patiently expect thoſe bleſſings, which they desired from God, ſuch as ſtrength againſt ſin, and grace to ſerve him? And do they

do

do what is in their power to procure what they pray for? Thus you may be sure it would be with them, if they were in good earnest in their Prayers. For when they go to any great Man to request a favour from him, they attend what answer he makes, and their thoughts are much upon it, and they are deeply concerned for the success of their request. Though they have been baptized into the Name of Christ, yet do they ever use to think what they are thereby engaged to, and see to answer that Engagement? And suppose they do sometimes come to the Communion, yet did they ever come to it with such a kind of Spiritual appetite and expectation of strength and benefit, as they go to an ordinary Meal? Or are they careful before hand to fit themselves for the Duty so as to profit by it? Whatever they may pretend, it is most manifest, that Religion is not taken by them, for the great work of their lives. They are far from spending their time, and busying their minds like Men that were sent into the World on purpose to serve God, which they can say is the reason why God made them. It is not their chief study and work so to know and please their Maker, and to get their Peace made with him through the Lord Jesus, that they may live with him hereafter in Glory for ever. No, no, to the Consciences of these Men I dare appeal, this is the least matter of a thousand with them, and there's scarce any thing which they less regard. They hear their Minister about these things, as if he was telling them a story of no concernment, or spoke in a strange Language, which they understood not. Was he but telling them the way to thrive in the World, and get store of riches, they would hear him more attentively, and remember better what he said to them, and not think they had done enough when they had stood in the Church for an hour as now they do. He that hath made any trial, may easily see that this sort of people do not give the same heed to one that discourseth to them about the matters of their Souls, as they do to him that speaks of earthly things. If you talk with a Citizen about his Trade, or with a Country-man about his Corn, or Cattel, or the Weather, or any the like Subjects, they can hold discourse with you well enough; but if you come to speak of the unseen Kingdom, and the way thereto, what need we have to search into our Souls, to see that we have got a good sound Title to that Glory: If you do but tell them of the shortness and un-

certainty of life, exhorting them therefore to get well prepared for Death and Judgment, how ſtrange is ſuch language as this to the ears of many? Some laugh at it as babling, others give you a bare hearing, but are little affected with the weightieſt matters delivered in the moſt piercing words that a man knows how to ſpeak. Nay many times they'll be taken up with other things ſo much, as not to mind or underſtand what is ſaid to them, nor do they afterwards remember it; but are as much moved with the barking of a Dog, or blowing of the Wind, as with the moſt ſerious affectionate Exhortations you can give them, And indeed how can Men take any great pleaſure to hear of things that are not in their own Element, but as it were out of their reach? Would not the plain Country-man be ready to laugh and wonder at a Scholar that ſhould talk to him in Latin, or make him tedious Diſcourſes of any point of Philoſophy, though he ſpoke in plain *Engliſh*? What's all this to him? He underſtands it not, or if he did, he may think, what ſhould he be the better for it? And does not the Word of God tell us, that the *natural man receives not the things of the Spirit, but they ſeem fooliſhneſs to him, becauſe they are Spiritually diſcerned.* The Doctrine of Regeneration by the Spirit, to thoſe that never felt it, is ſtill as ſtrange as it was to *Nicodemus*. And except we have before hand got ſome inward apprehenſion of the things that we hear of, all talk of them is but as an empty ſound, that ſignifies nothing. Wherefore no marvel, if they who think ſo ſeldom, and underſtand ſo little of God, and Chriſt, and a work of Grace to be wrought on their hearts, are no more affected nor ſtirred when they hear of them. And whilſt they perceive no profit they ſhould get by theſe things, what ſhould they hearken to them for? They cannot by all you ſay, get one penny more in their purſe, nor a Meals Meat, nor a Suit of Cloaths, and theſe are the moſt deſirable Enjoyments they are acquainted with. And its no great wonder, when we conſider the Education of the common ſort, if they be of ſuch a wretched temper. For perhaps they were born and brought up by Parents like themſelves, that knew not how to acquaint them what they were made for, in any ſuch manner as was likely to do them good; and, it may be, never ſo much as ſet them to School, to learn to read *Engliſh*; and in their Childiſh years it cannot be thought they ſhould have much

under-

underſtanding in Religion, when they think of little elſe but their Meat and Play; and when they grow up to riper years, they are ſet to Trades, and to work for their Livings; (I ſpeak of the meaner ſort) and when they come to be ſetled in the World, and have Wife and Children, then they have enough to do to provide for their Families; and cannot ſpare time to learn the way to Heaven, and if they live to be aged, they think themſelves too old to learn, and are too deep rooted in their ways to be drawn to forſake them without little leſs than a Miracle, and ſo there are multitudes even within the ſound of the Goſpel, that live and die in lamentable ignorance and ſenſeleſneſs. I know all this while in every eſtate and time through which they paſs, the moſt have opportunities for learning their duty, if they had any heart to it: But their minds are ſtill poſſeſſed with ſomething elſe.

And though they may be ſomewhat conſtant in keeping their Church, yet this being a thing they have always been wont to, before they knew what they did, they ſtill hold on in a cuſtomary manner, without duly conſidering what they come thither for; not thinking that the Miniſter ſpeaks to *them*, and about matters that are for life or death: The Diſcourſes alſo which they hear being upon particular ſubjects, they are like to profit the leſs by them, in that they have not ſuch a ſound and clear knowledge of the chief points of Religion, as may enable them to underſtand and profit by Sermons. And though from Children they may ſome of them be able to repeat their Creed, and Commandments, and Lord's Prayer, yet truly it is very eaſie to ſay theſe over a thouſand times without being much affected with them, or well underſtanding them, only pattering them over by rote: eſpecially if they never had theſe principles clearly laid open and explained to them. It may be alſo many of theſe never had any particular cloſe counſel given them, tending to awaken them to an apprehenſion of their condition, to convince them of their ſin and miſery by nature, and put them upon ſearching in good earneſt after the way to eſcape damnation, and be truly happy for ever. Or if they have been ſo exhorted, yet they will not be brought to think of theſe things ſoundly by themſelves, and to ſeek God by Prayer for direction and aſſiſtance. It is no eaſie nor trifling matter for a man wholly to change his thoughts, purpoſes, affections, and

manner of life, as all must do that turn from sin to true godliness. Such a change as this is not likely to be wrought without much consideration, and sober settled resolutions on man's part, to which the grace of God will not be wanting to make them effectual. I know it is also the grace of God that puts upon them, but yet it is a man himself that by the assistance of this grace must thus Consider, and thus Resolve. But now when should people set upon this work of considering *what they should do to be saved?* Something or other still happens in the way that keeps them from the work, or takes them off before it comes to any good issue. Either they are sleeping or working, eating or drinking, or playing or idling, dressing or undressing, or have some whither to go, or some body to speak to, or in some company that they cannot leave, or have some business in their heads, which they are contriving, or else are in sickness that unfits them for action, or some trouble hath befaln them which puts their minds out of order, or some happiness and prosperity which puffs them up with a foolish flashy joy; or they have some brave things in expectation which they are musing on, and pleasing themselves with before-hand. Some such matters as these I dare say fill the heads and hearts of most from one years end to another throughout their whole lives. These and such like are the things that come into their minds as soon as they are awake, and then presently they are set about one thing or other, or light into some company that takes them up for that day, and the like happens to morrow and the next day; and whilst the present time never appears convenient for the solemn performance of this great work of Repentance, it is by the most posted off till it is too late, and then in vain do they repent to all *Eternity* that they did not repent in *Time*. Now it could not be that they should never have a spare day or hour for the consideration of, and setting upon the work they were sent into the World for, but that they are guided in the course of their lives by this practical deep rooted opinion, *That their only business here, is to make this life as comfortable as they can*; and therefore that to get food, and raiment, and riches for themselves and their children, to enjoy pleasures, and be well accounted of in the world, are the best things which can be imagined, whereupon they wholly bend themselves to the attainment of these things, and on they go in a giddy heedless manner,

never

never well examining whether this *their way be not their folly*, not taking much notice what the principles and opinions are, which have the greatest power upon their lives, and whence their actions flow; which principles may be so wrought into their natures, that they shall lead and rule them whilst they are secret, and not distinctly known and weighed. And indeed this conceit, that the good things of this life are most to be set by and sought after, hath its first rise from our corrupted natures, which being fall'n off from God and contrary to him, enclines us to seek happiness any where, rather than in returning to his love. And then in Childhood, and for some years after, we have very weak apprehensions of any thing but what's before us, being wholly rul'd by our senses. And when our miserable mistakes have once taken root, and are become natural to us, its one of the hardest things in the world to be freed from them: for we are prone to be so conceited of our own ways, that we are by no means willing to be contradicted, much less to call our selves fools for all we have done, and begin the world anew; as if we had never set one step forward in the right way. And it must needs be the more difficult to convince men of the folly and baseness of such a carnal worldly life, because they observe it to be the custom of the most about them, high and low, even of such as are counted wise and judicious, worshipful and honourable persons. And what may they think, can they be so foully mistaken, who did but follow the course which they saw such men lead before them? And this indeed is one great cause of the mistakes and destruction of men, that when they come into the world, they chuse rather to follow the examples of their neighbours than the rules of right reason which they should gather from God's holy Word, and a due examination of things; and therefore they take to those actions, and that manner of life which they see others follow, without well thinking whether they do wisely or not: just as if a man should see a company of people upon the way running as for their lives, pretending that they are in pursuit of some great matters, and thereupon should presently set in with them, and run along as fast as they, without farther enquiry what they look for; till at length when they are all tired, he perceives they had no other design but perhaps to catch flies, which when they have, they know not what to do with; or to lay hold on some pretty bird which they could not

overtake: even thus when a man ſees thoſe about him running and riding, ſtriving and ſweating to get houſes and lands, and all outward enjoyments, he thinks it needleſs to enquire whether theſe things be worthy all their labours no, that's taken for granted; for ſure, may he think, theſe men are no fools, but know well enough what they do, and therefore without deliberation upon the matter, he joyns with the reſt in labouring and contriving for theſe worldly things, taking all the pleaſure in them that they will poſſibly yield. And whatever help is afforded them for the carrying on of this deſign, they will readily and thankfully comply with. If you ſupply them with what they were ſeeking for, they will greedily receive it, or if you will give them ſure directions how to get it, they will hearken to you, and diligently follow your advice. But whatever is preſented, that no ways conduceth to theſe their carnal ends, that which makes them no richer nor higher in the world, nor gives their ſenſes any delight, is like to be altogether ſlighted by them. What mean thoughts therefore muſt they needs have of Sermons, Sacraments, and all Spiritual advantages which are only means for the getting of an happineſs quite of another nature from that they are ſeeking after?

I hope this large Preface (which indeed I did not deſign) will not be altogether uſeleſs, nor ſeem impertinent; ſince they who ſo little care for hearing or reading God's Word, for Prayer or receiving Sacraments, who are liſtleſs to all duties, and feel no ſweetneſs in them, all ſuch may hence learn what is the root and ground of this diſtemper, what it is that makes them out of taſte with theſe rich and ſavoury Proviſions which all healthful Souls do ſo dearly love, even becauſe their ſecret, but moſt powerful, thoughts are, *that they have nothing better than their Bodies to provide for; and that to do this is the chiefeſt buſineſs they have, and that nothing is of any great uſe which makes not for this end.* But it would be quite otherwiſe with them, if they were indeed clearly convinced, and ſoundly perſwaded that they have ſouls which will never die, and that theſe are the beſt part, and deſerve moſt care, and are as much to be preferred before the Body as a Man before the Horſe which he rides on; and that theſe their immortal Souls can only be made happy by the favour of God, out of which they are fallen by ſinning againſt him, and that the great work of this life is

to

to get all breaches made up betwixt God and them, that ſo when they leave this world, they may be reſtored to perfect happineſs in the enjoyment of God; and that they can no way be thus reconciled to God but by Jeſus Chriſt, by whoſe merits and mediation their ſins may be pardoned, and by whoſe holy Spirit (which is given by the Father through him) they can only be ſo changed and ſanctified that they may be made *meet for the inheritance of the Saints*, in the heavenly light of God's preſence and love. Was the ſound belief of theſe plain, great, and commonly acknowledged truths, but well rooted in the hearts of Men, ſo as to overpower and change their affections, we ſhould ſoon perceive them to be other kind of perſons in all their behaviour, if they took it for the buſineſs of their lives to *work out their Salvation*; being convinced that they had nothing in this world to do but this, and what is in order to it, then would they diligently labour after a ſaving knowledge of a crucified Chriſt, which comprehends in it the whole of Religion. And then they would highly prize and diligently attend upon thoſe means which Chriſt hath appointed for the manifeſting himſelf, and conveying his ſaving benefits to the ſoul. They would take care to be found in thoſe ways wherein Chriſt is like to be found. Whatever had relation to him would be very much eſteemed by them; and they would never be at quiet till they had done their beſt to make it ſure, that they had got an intereſt in him, and through him a title to the Fathers everlaſting love. They would then rightly inform themſelves what's required of all that muſt be ſaved by Chriſt, and theſe conditions they would endeavour to come up to, and perform They would be willing to enter into the moſt ſolemn Covenant with him, to take him for their Saviour in all his Offices, by him to be brought to that glory which God hath prepared for true Believers. And the keeping of this Covenant would be their ſtudy and care through the whole courſe of their life. Now though conſidering theſe things it might appear a very fit method for the curing of mens miſtakes, and direct them in the way to bleſſedneſs, firſt to repreſent and demonſtrate to them that they have immortal Souls; and that the love of God is their only portion, and that this can no way be obtained but by the Lord Jeſus, and then to ſhew what is required to make us partakers of happineſs by him; yet ſince theſe things are in ſome ſort

known, and readily confeſt by the moſt, I ſhall at preſent wave this method, and chuſe rather to drive at the laſt of theſe, which will be found to contain all; namely to direct and exhort them to enter into Covenant, and make a thorough cloſure with Jeſus Chriſt, that through him their ſins may be ſubdued and pardoned, their perſons and natures reconcil'd to God, that they may be bleſſed for ever in communion with him. And even this is my chief deſign in laying down the following Directions to a due preparation for, and a right receiving of the Lord's Supper, and in giving Motives to the ſerious and frequent performance of that Duty, which I look upon principally, *as a ſolemniſing and teſtifying our Covenant with God by Jeſus Chriſt; and the ſincerity of the heart in making this Covenant, and our faithfulneſs in keeping it, is the very heart and ſcope of Chriſtianity.* For my intention in treating of this Subject, is not meerly to perſwade people to come to the Lord's Table (alas what a poor thing is that to be reſted in!) but to inſtruct them for a right coming to, and hearty receiving of Chriſt himſelf; then to come to the Sacrament, there to make and renew their Covenant with him in a more formal and expreſs manner, the more to affect, and deeplier to engage themſelves. For this being a ſenſible and ſolemn thing, will be apt to make the ſtronger impreſſion upon mens ſpirits, and perhaps they will be ſooner perſwaded to this work, becauſe it is ſo much fitted to ſenſe it ſelf. But the great danger is, leſt they ſhould ruſh upon that which they underſtand not the reaſon of, and think they have done enough by bare receiving the Sacrament, without conſidering to what purpoſe they do it; which would be great madneſs, and of worſe conſequence, than for a man to run and lay his hands upon the book, and kiſs it, and uſe the like ceremonies of an Oath, and never mind what he ſwears to, nor afterwards think what he hath done, though it was about a matter of life and death. And therefore I ſhall endeavour by God's aſſiſtance to prevent this miſcarriage, by ſhewing what is the nature and deſign of this Ordinance, in a right participation whereof conſiſts ſo much of Religion; ſince hereby a man profeſſeth and engageth himſelf to be a ſincere obedient Chriſtian, which may be underſtood by this compariſon before I come to ſpeak to it more fully, that the more ignorant Reader may the ſooner have the notion fixt on his mind. It is much

what

what, as if the Governour of a City, after there had been a ſeditious inſurrection of the Citizens, ſhould offer pardon to all that would acknowledge their fault, beg his pardon and return to their former ſubjection and peaceable behaviour; and moreover ſhould enjoyn all that were thus affected, to come take a piece of mony which he would give abroad, or to partake of a feaſt which he would make on purpoſe for the entertainment of ſuch; now would it not be madneſs, and groſs impudence, and diſſembling, for any to receive this mony, or go ſit at this Table, who were reſolved yet to continue their rebellion, and would imploy that very mony, and the ſtrength they received from his meat, againſt him that gave them; when as hereby they were to teſtifie their reſolutions to be faithful and obedient? Even thus hath it pleaſed the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Redeemer of rebellious degenerate mankind, to proclaim free and full pardon to all that will heartily repent of, and turn from their wicked ways, and take him for their Lord and Saviour, and ſubmit to his directions for their attainment of happineſs; and withal he hath commanded all that will thus become his Diſciples, firſt to be liſted under him by Baptiſm, whereby they are viſibly entred amongſt the number of profeſſing Chriſtians, and afterwards they who were baptized in infancy are to come to this Sacramental Feaſt, and there to joyn with their fellow believers, in a perſonal profeſſion of their willingneſs and reſolution to ſtand to that Covenant, whereinto they were engaged by baptiſm, in teſtimony whereof, they eat the Bread, and drink the Wine, whereby the Body and Blood of Chriſt is repreſented, as I ſhall further ſhew anon. Now would it not in like manner, be a ſtrange piece of folly and monſtrous hypocriſy, for any man to reſt ſatisfied with his having been baptized, or his receiving the Lord's Supper, and think himſelf therefore a Chriſtian good enough, without taking care to perform thoſe promiſes which he then made, but rather encourage himſelf in ſin by the conſideration of what he hath done, as if he might the more ſafely rebel againſt God, becauſe he had expreſly vowed againſt all ſuch Rebellion? Could there be a more deſperate, dangerous wickedneſs than to make ſuch a wilful miſtake? And yet I wiſh there be not thouſands guilty of it. Alas, alas! how few that have taken the earneſt-peny, and wear Chriſt's Colours, that ever think to any purpoſe what they are hereby

bound

bound to? How many in effect renounce their Baptism by their ungodly lives; and either neglect the Lord's Supper, or come to it to pacifie their Consciences, that they may sin the more freely, rather than to strengthen and engage themselves against every sin? As for Baptism, I shall not insist on it, though I grant this is the leading Sacrament appointed for the testimony of our first being devoted to God, which engagment we ought to call to remembrance, and renew at the Lord's Supper, whereof according to my promise I now come to speak.

CHAP. II.

What it is to do this (to celebrate the Communion) in remembrance of Christ. And

I. *That it includes the true knowledg of him.*

BEing desirous to contribute some assistance to those that need it, to bring them (through God's Blessing) to a conscientious performance of this great Duty, I observe there are two sorts of persons faulty herein, either such as neglect it, or that miscarry and fail in the manner of doing it. Those that neglect it are either such that do it out of meer wilfulness, as the grosly vicious, that will not come to this Sacrament, because they think this would lay an obligation upon them to forsake those sins which they never intend to part with, whatever comes on't; and the stupid senseless ones, that know not the worth, nor see the need of this Ordinance, or any other duties of Religion, who live as heathenishly, as if they had never heard of God and Christ, and another world, nor do they care to be instructed in these points, as if they were not at all concerned in them? or else they are such that abstain from it out of doubting and fear, not thinking themselves worthy, or not knowing whether they are worthy or not. Of this sort there are many good Christians, who too much indulge their own melancholy and dispondent apprehensions; and also many weaker: but, I hope, honest well-meaning people, who seem to have a great esteem for this Sacrament, but having always heard what a dangerous thing

thing it is to receive it unworthily, dare not venture upon it; not being well acquainted with the nature and reason of it, and being doubtful whether they are fit to come or not, being also, I fear, too languid and heartless in desiring after it, or in making preparation for it, and for such as these principally do I intend my Directions. By those that are guilty of miscarriage in the doing of this duty, I mean such as rush upon it ignorantly and rashly, not well weighing what they do, and who, notwithstanding their accustomary attendance at the Lord's Table, continue their old sinful Course of life: These also, I hope, may receive some benefit from the following Discourse, together with the most profane and ignorant, whilst I shall endeavour plainly to shew the intention of this Sacrament, and perswade them to attend thereupon in a regular manner. For since, in behalf of those for whom especially I write this, my great business is to shew who it is that is worthy to partake of this Ordinance, and wherein this worthiness doth consist; the method I will take shall be this, namely, to shew for what purpose it was appointed by Jesus Christ, and thence to discover those Qualifications and Graces which are required in the Communicants, that they may receive it aright to those purposes for which it was appointed; and after I have done this, I shall lay down some arguments or motives to quicken all to come to, and and celebrate it in this due manner, and then briefly direct those that intend to come.

As to the first, what was the reason and end why this Sacrament was appointed? I know not whence we should be better informed, than by looking back to the time of its first appointment, and to see what Christ tells us he did ordain it for; and this we may find expresly set down, *Luke* 22. 19. When he had broke the Bread, and distributed, he adds. *This do in remembrance of me.* And the same words he used also after the delivery of the Wine, as appears by the Apostle St. *Paul*'s relation, *who delivered unto them what he had received of the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 24, 25. Where, after the giving the Cup, is added, *This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*; and so again, *ver.* 26. saith the Apostle, *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come*, that is, you publish and represent it to the world, you acknowledge and commemorate it. So that by this it is plain, that the great end

of

of this Sacrament, to which all others may be reduced, is, *that by the Celebrating thereof we may remember Jesus Christ, and especially that we may keep up the memory of that ineffimable mercy to mankind, his dying for us*; a mercy which should never be forgotten by those on earth, and *shall* never be forgotten by those in heaven. Now hence it follows, that they who are in a capacity and fitness rightly to remember Christ and his Death, are worthy to partake of this Sacrament which was set apart for that purpose: Wherefore without going any farther I shall shew what is necessarily required to, contained in, or immediately flows from this remembrance of Christ, that so we may the more distinctly apprehend what is required of us to make us worthy Receivers: And herein, I suppose, will be found comprized those several graces usually laid down for the due qualification of Communicants, as Knowledge, Repentance, Faith, New obedience, Brotherly Love and Thankfulness. And as I go along, I intreat thee, Reader, seriously to look into thy own heart, and examine thy self whether thou findest in thee these qualifications or not; whether thou findest those graces wrought in thy heart, which may enable thee so to remember thy Redeemer, as may be acceptable to him, that so if thou findest thy self such a one as is described, thou mayst give God the praise, and take to thy self the comfort of so great a mercy, and be encouraged to proceed in this and all other holy duties; but if thou findest the contrary, that thou mayst with all speed and earnestness see to get thy heart changed, and thy wants supplied. And to this end (since I intend no other Application) I shall under every Head endeavour to help thee in thy enquiry into the state of thy soul, and in thy seeking after those Graces which thou mayst be convinced thou art destitute of, and hast hitherto been content without them; and in this part I shall be larger, as taking it to be most necessary; though having so large a field before me, I shall labour to confine my self.

1. First then, in order to a right remembrance of Jesus Christ, there is necessarily supposed *a knowledge of him:* for our memory contains only those persons or things which we before have known. How could he keep the *Fifth of November*, as a Thanksgiving for our deliverance from the Popish Powder-Plot, who hath not some knowledge before-

hand,

hard, that such a Plot there was laid by the *Papists*, and that by divine providence we were delivered from it? No more can any man remember Christ as he ought at the Sacrament, except he knows who this Christ is in his Person and Natures, and what his Offices are, what he came into the world for, what he hath done, and will do for us. And indeed this right knowledge of Christ necessarily requires and contains a knowledg of all the the chief points of Religion, of which I hope thou art not ignorant who owneſt the name of a Christian. It's a shame for thee if thou art, having such means and opportunities to inform thy self, as thou enjoyest; having liberty to read thy Bible, plain Catechisms, and other good Books, and to hear God's Word publickly preach'd. Notwithstanding all which advantages, I doubt there are many to be found, who are very dark, even in the first principles of Christianity, as not accounting it any part of their business to trouble their heads with such matters. And that which a man makes no great reckoning of, nor thinks himself much concerned in, though he may hear it an hundred times over, he'll scarce have so clear an insight into it, as he that hath heard it but once or twice with diligence and attention, applying his mind to it, as to a matter that is for his life. He that hears a Physician directing him to a Medicine that will recover him from some desperate disease, is far likelier (if he have the use of his reason) to take notice of, and fix into his mind what's told him, than another that sits by, who holds himself nothing concerned in it. So surely if people thought it any great matter to save their Souls for ever, they would soon see to get acquainted with the way to Salvation, and not remain in such brutish ignorance as multitudes do. And for the help of such I shall run over those Heads of Religion which more especially are required to enable us aright to remember Christ at this Commemoration-Feast, which he hath established in his Church. Know then that God at first made man in an happy estate, even *Adam* and *Eve* our first Parents, who if they had continued happy, so should, 'tis probable, we their Posterity have been too; but the condition of their continuing in that estate, being perfect obedience to all God's commands, they fell from it by breaking a particular command, eating of the fruit of a certain Tree in the Garden of *Eden*, whereof God hath enjoyned them not to eat, even

of

of the *Tree of Knowledge of good and evil*, as you may read at large *Gen.* 3. Thus their hearts were turned off from God, and fixt upon the Creature, which was pleasing to their senses. Hereupon they became liable to the wrath of God, who had before threatned, *that in that day they eat thereof they shall dye the death*, which included in it all kind of misery, whatever it should please God to inflict. They being thus become sinners, they begat Children like themselves, *conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity*, for *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* And beside that corruption of nature which did cleave to their Children, the guilt of their sin might also in some sort most justly be imputed to them, they being as common persons, represented all mankind, who fell with them when they fell But their Children, as they grew up, became guilty of actual sins in their own persons, to which their wicked natures did incline them, which did more expose them to the wrath of God. This condition was the world brought into by sin, become ignorant of God, prone to all wickedness, and deserved the greatest misery, even everlasting torment; and in this estate God might justly have left us, he might have *given us up to our own hearts lusts*, and so one by one as we came into the world, and rebell'd against him, might have destroy'd us for ever without any remedy. Yet he did not thus, but was pleased out of his own infinite wisdom to provide for us a Saviour, when we had thus undone, but could not help our selves. And who was this Saviour, but his own eternal only begotten Son, very God of very God, who in fulness of time became man, and by the power of the Holy Ghost was conceived in the womb of the Virgin *Mary*, and born of her without the least stain of sin, and was God and Man in a wonderful manner united in one person. This was that Jesus Christ, of whom we read in the Gospel, who after he had some time preach'd his Gospel to the *Jews*, laid down his life as a Sacrifice to make satisfaction for the sins of the world, and rose again on the third day, and after forty days continuance on earth, he ascended into Heaven, and there is exalted to sit on the right hand of God in that humane nature which he assumed, and there he *lives for ever to make intercession for us*, that the benefits he hath purchas'd may be given out to the Sons of men. And these benefits are such, that shew him to be a perfect

Saviour

Saviour every way fitted to our neceſſities. For by his undertaking this work of our Redemption, he did as it were reprieve the world, and kept us from being ſuddenly deſtroyed by divine Juſtice, which otherwiſe would have laid hold on us, and did obtain for us that we ſhould be tried once again for our lives, ſo that our firſt Fall ſhould not be our damnation, if we would accept of the way of Salvation which he had procured for, and revealed to us. Now ſince our firſt happineſs did conſiſt in our being like to God, being righteous and holy and obedient to him, that it might appear that Chriſt conſulted for his Fathers Honour, as well as our intereſt; the way to Salvation which he appointed was this, That we ſhould love God above all, and count it our greateſt happineſs to be reconcil'd to him; that we ſhould humbly acknowledg and repent of all our ſins, of nature and practice, whereby we had provoked his anger againſt us, and be ſincerely willing to live in obedience to his Laws, and that we ſhould own him the Lord Jeſus as our only Redeemer, and depend upon him only for ability to perform theſe conditions, and to obtain the Pardon of ſin and the favour of God upon performance of them. And then that we might have this ability, who by the fall were become weak and unable for good, but ſtrongly bent to evil; Chriſt by his death obtained of the Father, that the Holy Ghoſt the third Perſon of the Trinity, ſhould be imploy'd to bring men to the performance of thoſe conditions which Chriſt required of all whom he would ſave: And accordingly the Holy Ghoſt, in purſuance of this work, did inſpire the Apoſtles and their followers to write and preach the Goſpel, and ſeal'd to the truth of it with miracles, for the conviction of all that ſhould hear it: And in ſome places in all ages hath enabled Men to make it known. And moreover this Holy Spirit doth accompany the Word to the Hearts of the Hearers, and where he is received, doth enlighten the mind, and ſoften the heart, and heal, and change, and ſanctifie the nature of Man, and reſtores him to the Image of his Maker, and begets in him a ſtrong love to God, and a willingneſs to pleaſe him in all things, and brings him to an hearty Sorrow for, and an hatred of all his ſins, and inclines and enables him to come to Chriſt, to believe in him, to love and highly to eſteem him for this work of Redemption

which

which he hath wrought, aſcribing it wholly to his merit, that he hath hopes of mercy from God, and any power to pleaſe him. And then for all thoſe who by this aſſiſtance of the Spirit, are made willing thus to come to Chriſt, and to God by him, for theſe Chriſt hath purchas'd, that their ſins ſhould be forgiven them, and greater meaſures of the Spirit beſtowed on them; in a word, that they ſhould have all things good for them here, and be received into everlaſting Glory hereafter. But all they who reject theſe offers of Sanctification and Salvation, ſhall die in their ſins, and be everlaſtingly in torments with the Devil and his Angels. And this ſame Jeſus Chriſt will be the Judge of all Men, and at the end of the World ſhall come with great Glory and Power, and raiſe up the Bodies of all that were dead, and change thoſe that are alive, and ſhall pronounce, and cauſe to be executed the ſentence of Abſolution and Glorification upon the Righteous, and the Sentence of Condemnation upon the Wicked. This is that Jeſus, the Redeemer of the fallen World, whoſe memory ought to be ſo precious to you. And theſe were the weighty Cauſes, and the glorious Effects of that death which you ſhew forth, and keep up the remembrance of it, in celebrating the Sacrament. I ſuppoſe it needleſs to turn you to the particular Texts of Scripture, proving theſe things, they being ſo common and well known, and the truth of them ſo plain, that they cannot well be doubted of by any that own the Chriſtian Religion. And I hope they are neither ſo many, nor ſo difficult, that you ſhould pretend you want time or learning, or wit to get well acquainted with them. I dare ſay, you could learn other kind of matters than theſe, if you could get any worldly advantage by it. If Books were printed that ſhould teach you how to be rich and honourable, to live in eaſe and pleaſure, to enjoy health, long life, and all kind of proſperity, you would pore ſufficiently upon ſuch Books, and beat your Brains day and night, but you would get to underſtand and remember them. But if indeed you have ſo little regard to your Souls, that you will periſh for lack of knowing thoſe things which might eaſily be known, your Damnation is juſt. And as for you that think the moſt ſottiſh Ignorance is excuſable, becauſe you are no Scholars, and yet take your ſelves for as good Chriſtians as the beſt, let me tell you plainly, if you be

without

without the knowledge of these principal heads of Religion, you are not fit to be so much as call'd Christians. Are you Disciples of Christ, that are so blockish and stupid, that you have not yet learnt the first Principles, which he teacheth his Scholars? Nay, if you refuse to learn them, you thereby renounce Jesus Christ; to wit, as he is your Prophet and Teacher, which if you do, expect not Salvation from him. And, as without being acquainted with these fundamental Truths, you are able to perform no duty aright, so especially not this of receiving the Lords Supper; for, I say, can he remember Christ as he should, that knows not who he is, what he has done for him, or in what need he stands of him? And they, who being in this wilful blindness, venture upon this Ordinance, must needs do it to their own hurt, coming to it as a common Meal, or meerly for custom or fashion sake; and so are guilty of the very same miscarriage, which the Apostle represents as so dangerous, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. *They eat the Bread, and drink the Wine, not discerning the Lord's Body*, not having the knowledge of Christ, who is there represented, whereby they might be enabled to give him that reverence and honour, which is required of all that are admitted to these mysteries.

I need not sure spend time in examining the Reader whether he know these Truths before laid down, or not. If thou hast the use of thy reason, thou canst tell, I hope, what it is thou knowest, and what thou dost not; wherefore take thy self to task, and go over the several points of Religion, as I have before briefly mentioned them, if thou thinkest fit, and take account of thy own apprehension and understanding, and where thou findest thou art most wanting, be diligent to inform and satisfie thy self, and to this purpose make conscience of hearing the word preach'd, and of reading the holy Scriptures in private, and get well acquainted with the Grounds of Religion, as you may find them in Catechisms, or the plainest Books that treat of them. But think it not enough to be able to say the bare words, to repeat your Creed without Book, or the like, but labour well to understand them, and fix them deeply upon your mind, as those things which are of greatest necessity to be known and remembred of any in the world. But yet barely to know and remember them, will not profit you, except you digest and improve them,

th it they move your affections and guide you in your converſation. It's a moſt lamentable miſtake to think, that the meer ſaying of what you believe, and what you are to do, will ſave your ſouls: as if there were ſome ſtrange force in the very words, which would make them uſeful to all that ſhould patter them over, for by this means a *Parrot* might paſs for a good Chriſtian. If you had a Receit given you, directing you how to cure the Tooth-ach, do you think it would take away the pain to get it without book, and ſay it over by rote? would you not rather ſee to read it, and make uſe of the Medicine which it ſhould appoint? even thus muſt you read God's Word, and good Books, to know what is your duty, that you may ſet with all your might to the doing of it. And indeed your knowledg is defective, till it come thus to affect your heart: wherefore let that be the mark by which you may judge of its truth and ſincerity, if it raiſe your affections, and leads you forth to action, 1 *John* 2. 3, 4. For if you know that God hath in himſelf all fulneſs and goodneſs, and know that you are needy and indigent, and can only receive ſupply and ſatisfaction from him, you cannot but deſire after him, and ſeek how to get a part in his love. If you know that you are in your ſelves loſt undone Creatures, and that Jeſus Chriſt, and he alone, is able and willing alſo to recover and ſave you, you will then betake your ſelves to him, for healing and ſaving mercy. If you know that ſin is your diſeaſe, bondage and diſhonour, and holineſs your glory, liberty, and health, you will readily comply with the Spirit of God to be freed from ſin, and to be made as holy as your nature is capable. This then is true and ſaving knowledge, which muſt be in all that can affectionately remember Chriſt at the Communion. Of this knowledg Chriſt ſpeaks, *John* 17. 3. *This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* And of this the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 53. 11. *By his knowledg ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtifie many*, that is, he ſhall juſtifie thoſe who have ſuch a ſound and working knowledg of him as leads them to the performance of what he requires of them. For if men once come indeed to know that Chriſt is the Son of God, who earneſtly deſires their good, and enjoyns them nothing but what makes thereto, ſurely they will readily then hearken to and obey him. All this I add to *knowledg*, becauſe it is very imperfect 'till it become thus

fruitful;

fruitful; and will not vindicate those in whom it is, from the imputation of ignorance.

Now to get your knowledge to be thus powerful upon your hearts and lives, I cannot advise you to any more necessary course than these two, 1. *Humbly to beg of God to work the truth with power upon your souls*, that you may *receive it in the love thereof*. When you go to hear, or sit down to read, beseech God to accompany the Word by his mighty Spirit, that it may sink into your minds, and not become unprofitable; but that it may lighten and awaken you, and reach to the very inward of your Souls, and give you such insight into your selves, and such a discovery of your duty, that you may vigorously be carried on to the performance of it. And then 2. *You must often consider of those truths that you know*; you must dwell upon them in your minds till you are moulded, changed and wrought upon by them. For want of this consideration chiefly it is, that so many remain in ignorance; and that many others, who have some slight knowledg, are no more bettered by it: for you must meditate upon what you read or hear, that you may the more clearly and distinctly understand it, which you cannot do, if words slip out of your thoughts assoon as they are out of your ears. And then, after the doctrins of the Gospel are well understood, you must farther consider wherein they concern your particular case, and what use you are to make of them; for otherwise how is it possible they should profit you? Though you have never so much Book-learning, and Brain-knowledge, what are you the better for all, if you improve it not to your own good, by this serious consideration? Can you think ever to have a profitable saving knowledg of Christ, if you use not seriously to think of him, what need you stand in of him, and what benefit he will be to you, and what must be done to make him yours? Can you get your sins mortified and pardoned, if you will not so much as bethink your self what an evil thing sin is, and what your particular sins are? Can you be moved with the hopes of Glory, if you have it not in your thoughts? Can you escape your danger, if you forget it, and so are out of fear? If then you would ever have any profit by your knowledg, follow the Apostles advice to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. 2. 7. *Consider what is said* to thee at any time, and that's the next way to obtain from the Lord *understanding in all things*,

things; so likewise, 1 *Tim.* 4. 15. *Meditate on these things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.* If you have no time to spare purposely for Meditation, yet take time as you are upon the way, or about any business which will permit you. And let this be the chief subject of your thoughts, which I am sure deserves them most, *even how you should do to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ*; and never leave following on this enquiry, till you be fully resolved, to set about what's required of you to that purpose.

As there must be this sound knowledg of Christ, and of the chief points of Christian Religion in all that can duly remember Christ at the Sacrament; so it will be readily granted, that this Jesus Christ must be believed to be indeed the Saviour of the World, as is declared in the Scriptures: and all that is there laid down of his Incarnation Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession, and coming again to Judgment, must be believed to be true. I will not make a distinct Head of this, because its necessarily supposed in the former, as I have explained it; for our knowledg of these truths is never like to be effectual with us, if we are not first of all perswaded that they are truths. And the Reader might be offended, If I should make any question, whether he believes the Christian Religion, and takes Scripture to be the Word of God, and acknowledges that Christ is the Son of God, and the promised Messiah, of whom the Prophets all along in the old Testament foretold. But though there are few who openly deny, or seem to doubt of these things, yet I fear there is a great defect, and too common even in this part of Faith, which consists in an assent to the truth of the Gospel. For many there are who take little pains to settle their belief upon sure foundations, which would bear a shaking, if any assault should be made; and can give little reason why they are of this Religion or Opinion rather than any other, except because this is that they learnt of their Parents, and is profest by their neighbours, and set up and countenanced by the Laws of the Land; and surely these are but weak arguments. But here let me add as before, that granting you do believe all that the Gospel reveals, yet this is not enough except your belief prevail with you to do what the Gospel requires in order to your Salvation. And this is indeed the surest way to get your

Faith

Faith well ſtrengthned and confirmed, even by yielding obedience to the truth, and trying by your own experience, what benefit comes by conforming your ſelves to the will of God revealed in the Goſpel, whether you can find the promiſes made to ſuch obedient ones in any meaſure fulfilled to you; and when you have found this, you will ſay with the Apoſtle, *You are not aſham'd of the Goſpel of Chriſt, becauſe you have* begun *to find it to be the power of God to Salvation.* Our Lord himſelf told us, *John* 7. 17. *That if any man will do his will, he ſhall know of his doctrin, whether it be of God or not.* This is like a mans taſting of Hony, which will give him more aſſurance of its ſweetneſs than all arguments could do; and this will make him confidently affirm it, though the cunning'ſt Sophiſter ſhould endeavour by ſubtile arguments to perſwade him to the contrary; his experience will confute them all. This is the reaſon why great Wits and profound Scholars ſometimes turn Atheiſts and Infidels, whilſt the honeſt weak Chriſtian, that hath reliſht and well digeſted the truths of Religion, holds them ſo firmly in his heart rather than brain, that he can die for that which he cannot ſo well diſpute for. Thus far then I hope you ſee its manifeſt, that to your right remembrance of Chriſt, and ſo to make you worthy Communicants, its neceſſary that you know who this Chriſt is, and what you have to do with him, and to believe that he is indeed the Redeemer of mankind, and that all that Scripture ſpeaks of him is true.

CHAP. III.

II. *A right remembring of ſin, the occaſion of his death. Of Repentance, with conſiderations to work and promote it.*

IT may as eaſily be underſtood, that if at the Sacrament you keep up a remembrance of Chriſt, and in an eſpecial Manner, *ſhew forth his death 'till he come*, then you muſt needs remember what was the occaſion of his dying, and that was the ſins of the World. Had there been no ſin, we had needed no Saviour. Had we continued in our firſt eſtate we, we had needed no Reſtorer. Now hence it

Will naturally follow, that no man can duly celebrate the Sacrament, *whose eyes have not been opened to see the exceeding great evil that is in sin, and to be convinced of his own sins, so as to lament and hate, and resolve against them.* For is it possible for that Man to remember Christ's Death as he ought, that sees no hurt in that which put him to death? Nay, that loves the very Nails and Spear that were thrust into his hands and feet, and sides, and intends to *crucifie him afresh*, when he is gone away? And all this doth he that never saw the odiousness of sin, and that is not heartily set against it, but secretly retains and cherishes it. Can he rightly remember Christ's death, who sees no great need he stood in of it, nor is sensible of any great advantage that comes to him by it, but rather thinks Christ might have kept his blood to himself, and it wou'd be a disadvantage to him to attain the ends and benefits of his bloodshed? And such wretched blasphemous thoughts in effect hath he that sees not his sad estate by reason of Sin, and that thinks it would be to his loss to part with it. Wherefore since it evidently appears that true Repentance is so absolutely necessary to qualifie and fit a man for this Ordinance, where it is to be renewed, and to which he must come with an humble broken heart, let me desire thee to put the question to thy own heart, whether thou know'st by experience, what it is to repent of, and be truly humbled for Sin? And that thou may'st know the better what I mean, let me ask thee, Didst thou ever yet seriously consider what thy condition is by nature, and by reason of thy careless sinful life? And hast thou found thy self sensibly affected and stirred with this consideration, so that thou hast been verily perswaded, that thou art in thy self a lost creature, and except there be a way for mercy, art like to perish for ever? And hast thou been convinced that Sin is the cause of all this misery and danger which thou art liable to? And hast thou hereupon heartily griev'd for, and bewail'd thy wretched miserable state? Hast thou been humbled for the sin thou broughtest in to the world with thee, and for all the sins which thou know'st by thy self, and canst remember thou hast at any time committed? Hast thou been careful to search into thy heart, and to look back upon thy life past, that thou mightest find out what thy particular sins are, that thou may'st confess them before God, and forsake them? And hast thou indeed been so sensible of the evil of Sin, chiefly as it is rebellion

against

againſt that God who made thee, and hath ſent his Son to Redeem, and Spirit to Sanctifie thee, and hath daily given thee ſo many mercies to engage thee to pleaſe him? Haſt thou, I ſay, ſeen ſo much vileneſs and baſeneſs in thy diſhonouring and provoking ſo good a God, that this conſideration hath melted and broke thy heart, and wrought thee into a bitter hatred and loathing of every known ſin, ſo that thou haſt earneſtly deſired to be delivered from it, which is ſo odious in its ſelf, and ſo miſchievous to thee? And haſt thou therefore been deliberately reſolved, by the help of God, without any more delay, to put away far from thee whatever is diſpleaſing to God, and to return to him from whom thou haſt faln, and to an obedience to thoſe Laws which thou haſt violated and contemned? Examine thy ſelf faithfully, whether thou haſt ever experienced ſuch a change of thy mind as this I have deſcribed, which may well be call'd *Repentance unto life*. Or rather on the other hand, doſt thou not find that thou art ſuch a one ſtill as ever thou waſt; as earthly and carnal as ever, as hard-hearted and ſtupid, and as fond of Sin as ever, and know'ſt not what it means to have thy heart broken for thy offences committed againſt the great God of Heaven and Earth? Nay, it may be thou prid'ſt thy ſelf in being of the very ſame mind and diſpoſition that thou art now, ever ſince thou canſt remember. Thou art one that haſt always lov'd God, and believed in Chriſt, and bore a good Conſcience towards all men, and then I fear all's little better than ſtark naught with thee: for though there may be multitudes of good people in times of light, and having good education, that cannot diſtinctly tell, when they were in a more eſpecial manner wrought upon, and brought home to God; yet few, if any, but can remember that once they were much worſe than they are; even that they were too like the reſt of the world, but now they find they are waſhed and cleanſed: Perhaps when thou haſt ſworn, or been drunk, or committed any the like wickedneſs, thou could'ſt cry, *God forgive me*, and ſay thou art a great ſinner, but ſtill goeſt on, and remaineſt as bad as thou waſt. If this indeed be thy caſe, if thou are yet a meer ſtranger to this work of Chriſt upon thy Soul, who is *exalted* in the firſt place *to give repentance*, thou art at preſent very unfit to drink of that Blood which was ſhed for, and which ſeals the *Remiſſion of ſins*.

Now (that I may proceed in the method I promiſed,

by directing to the attainment of those graces which are wanting) in order to the breaking of thy hard heart, and humbling thy soul for sin, I might advise thee in the first place to look back into thy heart and life, to find out thy particular sins, not being content in the general to confess thy self a sinner, as all men are: for this is not so likely much to work upon thee, but to fasten upon thy most remarkable sins, and dwell upon and bewail them, and so all lesser evils, and that *body of Death* which thou carriest about thee continually, which was born with thee. In this method partly may you find *David*'s confession, *Psal.* 51. at the beginning to the 5. *verse*. Further I might direct thee earnestly to beg of God to open thy eyes, and shew thee what thy estate is, and discover to thee more of the evil of sin, before thou feel its sad effects when repentance will come too late. Moreover thou art to use all other means appointed for the working of a true and saving sorrow for sin, as to observe what God speaks against it in his Word, and to attend diligently to the most searching and awakening Preaching; and to be much employ'd in those considerations that have a special tendency to the begetting of this frame; and of this sort I might name several, as for instance to think frequently how great and gracious a God sin is committed against, and what particular reasons thou hast to serve and please him, from the mercies and means thou enjoyest; think how he stands related to thee as thy Creator, Preserver, and Ruler, and therefore disobedience to him is most odious, impudent, and undutiful. Withal it's good to consider how much hurt sin doth to the Soul, which is so excellent a Being, how it defiles, debaseth, and disquiets it, how it exposeth the whole man to all kind of evils and sufferings here on earth, and to everlasting torments hereafter, and deprives men of those unspeakable joys, which are to be had with and from God. But to avoid tediousness, I shall pass over these and many the like considerations, and keeping to the Subject in hand, shall rather direct thee to fetch matter for Humiliation and Repentance from the Cross of Christ, the remembrance whereof at the Sacrament should still keep up and renew thy Godly sorrow. If then thou art one who never yet saweſt any great hurt in sin, but for all the ill language which is given it, canst quietly and lovingly entertain it, let me beseech thee a while to fix thy thoughts upon a crucified Saviour,

viour, and then remain of this wretched opinion if thou canst. Behold the Son of God become man; a most innocent holy person, whose whole life was spent in doing good, who heal'd Diseases, cast out Devils, pitied all that were afflicted, taught the Ignorant, pray'd for poor Sinners; after all, behold this blessed Jesus, who had never in all his life been guilty of the least sin in thought, word, or deed, nor ever gave just cause of offence to any man living behold him I say, in the Garden a little before his crucifying, sorrowful even to death, in such a bitter agony that he sweat as 'twere great drops or clots of Blood; and what inward pains and sorrows dost thou think must those needs be, which put him into such an unnatural sweat as this, though his patience was as much greater than any mortal mans, as his sufferings themselves were; for we cannot imagine that he who so calmly bore all those indignities and cruelties which were offered and inflicted by insolent men, should be less patient in regard of those sufferings which he underwent immediately from God, but we may conclude that these were infinitely the greater. Then after this beginning of sorrows, and after he had been most vilely abused and set at naught by the Rulers, the chief Priests, the Soldiers, and common people; after he had in a jeer been cloathed in a Purple Robe, with a Crown of Thorns on his Head, and a Reed in his Hand; after he had been laught at, spit on, whipt and buffeted, behold him brought forth to be stretcht upon the Cross, where his enemies stood gazing, shouting, and wagging their heads at him; whilst his tender hands and feet are struck through with nails that fastned him to the wood, and in his Soul he felt that pain which wrung from him that doleful complaint, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Now let me beg thee to dwell a while upon this Subject with the reason and bowels of a man, and then tell me whether in thy conscience thou think'st it was for a small matter that the Lord of Glory underwent such grievous sufferings. What? was Christ so prodigal of his Blood as to shed it for a trifle? or was God so cruel as to put his own dearly beloved Son to all this smart for an inconsiderable thing? Certainly if thou art a Christian, thou canst not harbour any such base thoughts. Well then, what was it that put Christ to all this sorrow, and shame and smart? Ah friend, it was thy sin and mine, and the rest of the worlds that was the cause, and canst

thou

thou then imagine it an harmleſs thing? If thou doubt of what I ſay, hear the plain Word of God, *Iſa.* 53. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Surely he hath born our griefs and carried our ſorrows; yet we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed. All we like ſheep have gone aſtray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* 1 Per. 2. 21 *Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us,* ver. 24. *Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree* —— Gal. 3. 13. And at the inſtitution of his Supper he acquaints us that his *Blood was ſhed for the Remiſſion of ſins*, Mat. 26. 28. When Man had rebell'd againſt his Maker, and broke that Law which threatned deſtruction to him that ſhould break it, there was no other way that we are told of, but either he himſelf muſt undergo the puniſhment he had deſerved, or ſome one elſe on his behalf. And therefore man being ſpared, there was found no way for the ſatisfaction and honour of offended Juſtice, but by theſe ſufferings which the Lord Jeſus our Surety underwent; who being ſo glorious a perſon, even the Son of God made Man, he only *being made a Sacrifice for ſin could condemn ſin in the fleſh*, diſcovering to all the world that ſin was a moſt hainous evil, ſo hateful and diſpleaſing to the bleſſed Majeſty, that he would not forgive to any man his iniquity without ſatisfaction made; and no other ſatisfaction would he accept of but the Death of Chriſt, *who is become our propitiation, and hath made an atonment for us.* And can there poſſibly be imagined any argument of greater weight to bring all conſiderative perſons to deteſt and forſake that which hath been found ſo miſchievous? And give me leave to improve this conſideration in two or three particulars; that ſo it may be the clearlier diſcerned, and the force of it more felt.

1. Methinks it may be great matter of humiliation *to us, to think that we ſhould be ſo hainouſly guilty in departing from God, and living in rebellion againſt him, that we could not by any means avoid his deſerved Wrath, but by theſe bitter ſufferings of the Lord Jeſus.* Certainly, Reader, hadſt thou been preſent when Chriſt was ſo abuſed by the cruel Jews and their Rulers, it would have mov'd thee to compaſſion, if thou hadſt only thought him innocent. But if moreover, thou hadſt known he endured all that for

thy

thy ſake, would it not have affected thee much more? If thou hadſt ſeen him ſpit upon, mock'd and ſtricken with the palms of their hands; if thou hadſt beheld the Blood running down when he was ſcourged, or heard his groanings in the Garden, or upon the Croſs, and then hadſt thought within thy ſelf, *all this is for my ſake, this have I been the cauſe of*, would it not have moved and melted thy heart? If thou ſhould'ſt now ſee any of thy friends put to cruel tortures to free thee from them, would it not make thy heart even bleed within thee? And why then may it not have the ſame effect upon thee, to ſet a dying Chriſt before thine Eyes, who as *he became poor for our ſakes, that we through his Poverty might be made rich*, 2 Cor. 8. 9. *So he was chaſtiſed that we might have peace, received ſtripes that we might have healing*, as in that forequored 53. of *Iſaiah*. But yet I remember what our bleſſed Lord, when he was going to ſuffer, ſaid to the Women that followed him weeping, *Luke* 23. 28. *Daughter of* Jeruſalem *weep not for me, but for your ſelves and your Children*; ſo ſay I, poor Sinners, weep not for Chriſt out of a kind of pity to him, that he ſhould unjuſtly (as to Men) be put to ſo great ſmart, but weep for your ſelves and your ſins that were the cauſe. And this is that I chiefly intend under this head, that ſeeing Chriſt hath bore ſuch an heavy Load upon thy account, among the reſt, thou maiſt hence learn the true nature & deſert of ſin, of thy own ſins which thou art wont to make ſo light of. Certainly the very torments of the damned do not more plainly diſcover the evil of ſin, and God's hatred of it, than the ſufferings of Chriſt do. For it is evident, that the greatneſs of the puniſhment, where the Judge is knowing and upright, is a plain Argument of the greatneſs of the offence. If you ſhould ſee a man by the way hung up alive in Chains, you would ſoon conclude it was for murther, or ſome the moſt horrid wickedneſs, that he was ſo dealt with. And as evident it is, that the worth and eminency of the perſon who is puniſhd, ſpeaks the offence proportionably of a higher nature. If we ſhould hear that a King, who is both juſt and merciful, had cauſed his own Sons right hand to be cut off, we might well conclude there was ſome more than ordinary cauſe; but eſpecially if he, being guiltleſs himſelf, had ſuffered this for another mans ſake, we ſhould reaſonably infer, that it was a crime

of

of the higheſt nature, for which was made ſo dear ſatisfaction. Now what muſt we think when we ſee the Lord Jeſus upon the Croſs, who though he felt pain and ſorrow, only as he was in our nature, yet was that nature ſo nearly united to the Divine, that it's ſaid, *God purchaſed his Church with his own Blood*, Acts 20. 28. ſo 1 Joh. 3. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us*, that is, Chriſt, who was God as well as Man, laid, &c. The like, to mention no more, we find *Phil.* 2. 6, 7, 8. If then we conſider one ſo far advanced above men, laid ſo low; one *holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners*, ſuffering ſuch grievous things, may we not in all reaſon conclude, that the ſin which cauſed this was out of meaſure *ſinful*, for that's the worſt word that can be given it; its nature being ſo odious that nothing can be ſaid of it ſufficient to expreſs its vileneſs. Good Reader, then let me perſwade thee to judge of thy ſin by this evidence, and never more to hearken to thy own Fleſh, or to the ſubtle Tempter, or thy fooliſh Companions, that would make thee believe there's no ſuch hurt in thoſe ſins that pleaſe thee, that thou need'ſt not be ſo careful to avoid them, or ſo deeply humbled for them. That Devil, who would perſwade thee that it is ſuch a matter of nothing to provoke God to anger, knows and feels the contrary in himſelf. So much hurt as there is in a Devil compared to an Angel, in Hell compared to Heaven, ſo much hurt he hath learnt there is in ſin. Beware, leſt thou come to learn it by ſuch ſad experience thy ſelf. But that I may finiſh this, let me once again ask thee, whether thou dareſt ſay, that Chriſt underwent greater ſufferings than he needed to have done, in order to make ſatisfaction for our ſins, or that God laid on him more than in juſtice he ought, when he was become our Surety? If thou dar'ſt not affirm either of theſe, beware how thou minceſt and leſſeneſt thy ſins when thou ſhould'ſt repent of, and bewail them; for by ſo doing, thou doſt in effect thus blaſpheme God. Oh then let ſin be call'd to the bar; indict it for a Murtherer, as well thou may'ſt, accuſe it as guilty of the bloody death of the Lord of Life, ſhew all the Wounds and Scabs that it gave him; and ſee that thou pronounce ſentence againſt it, even utter death without any pity or remorſe; and heartily lament thy own baſeneſs, in having ſo long given loving entertainment to ſuch a Murtherer and Traytor. And when ever thou find'd any favourable

thoughts of sin arising in thy breast, call to mind what it did against Christ, and let that make thy heart rise against it, and even boil with an holy hatred and desire of revenge. And let the frequent remembrance of those streams of Blood, which thy sins fetch'd from him, open thy Eyes to shed streams of tears; or however work thy heart to an unfeigned sorrow for all thy Iniquities, for which thy Saviour was thus wounded.

2. The next thing I would have thee to enlarge thy Meditations upon in the sufferings of Christ, in order to the bringing of thee to a kindly repentance, is *that unspeakable love which is hereby manifested to the Sons of Men*: when I speak of Repentance, I mean not meerly thy shedding of a few tears, but an inward change of thy mind, as I before shewed, that thou should'st turn from Sin to the love of God; and I know not what can be more likely to produce this, than to shew thee the intolerable evil and mischief of Sin, that thou may'st turn from it, and the infinite goodness of God, that thou may'st be drawn to him. Both these the Cross of Christ most admirably holds forth; so that well might the Apostle call *Christ crucified, the wisdom of God, and the power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 23. 24. How it shews the evil of Sin to bring us to loath and leave it, I have already shewn, and shall do more in two following particulars. That which I would now set thy thoughts upon, is, the inconceivable love of God in giving Christ for us, and of Christ, in being willing to lay down his Life, *that as many as believe in him might not perish, but have everlasting life*. Consider seriously how the great God hath sent after thee a poor Worm; the God whom thou had'st sinn'd against, makes thee offers of peace; the God who needs thee not, yet appears desirous of thy happiness; when he might have poured out everlasting wrath upon thee, he was willing to shew his compassion. And see what he has done in order to thy recovery. He hath sent his own Son, *made of a Woman, made under the Law*, and *delivered him to death for our Offences*, and accepted of the satisfaction he hath made on the behalf of all, that shall by him come to that God from whom they are faln: and by his death, not only pardon of Sin, and deliverance from Hell, but a glorious Kingdom that shall never fade, is purchas'd for all true Believers. So that here,

1. *Thou seest plainly there is hope of pardon and acceptance upon thy hearty sorrow for, and resolution against sin.* And whom

whom would not this encourage to come in freely, acknowledging and protesting against their former Backsliding and Rebellions? If indeed thou wast past hope, it were as good to keep thy sins whilst thou may'st, and make thy best of them. But this is not yet thy case; and if it hereafter should be, thou may'st thank thy own wilfulness. For Jesus Christ hath *brought in a better hope*: there is by him liberty proclaim'd to the Captive, freedom to all that are bound, ease and rest to all that are burdened, a pardon to all that are penitent. And what! Will not this make thee stir? Is a Golden Scepter held forth, and wilt not thou lay hold of the opportunity? Is God willing to put up all the affronts he hath received from thee, if thou wilt now come and submit thy self, and will not this bring thee in? Is he ready to be reconciled, and art thou backward? What, dost thou rather hold off, because he doth so invite, and importune thee to him? Because he is pleased with so much earnestness and compassion to call thee off from sin to himself; dost thou the more securely run on in wickedness? Oh base ingratitude, and meer madness! Because there is hope of pardon discovered by the Gospel, as procured by Christ, therefore, even therefore do wretched Sinners harden their Hearts, and embolden themselves to continue at a distance from God, as if it was a matter of nothing to get their peace made with them, or as if he must of necessity pardon and save them, let them live as they list. Thus vilely do they pervert the very design of the Gospel. Whereas were they ingenuous and reasonable, they would acknowledge it to be a most forcible motive and engagement to cast away sin, to hear that there was hopes of having forgiveness and favour from God. If a company of Subjects should rebel against their Prince, what course would be more effectual in all probability to reclaim them, than to assure pardon to all that would throw down their Arms? But if they should be so base as to abuse the mercy of their Prince, and think, because he was so compassionate, they might the safelier persist in their rebellion, it is but just they should be destroy'd. If thou love thy Soul, then beware how thou abusest the Grace of God. *Wilt thou put away from thee the evil of thy doings, wash thee and make thee clean*, and so with humility and submission flie to God for Mercy. If so, this Mercy thro' Christ, shall be assuredly thine. But otherwise,

know

know there is not a word of comfort for thee in the whole Goſpel, nothing but what may ſtrike thee with terror. For remember well, that the death of Chriſt gives all the encouragement in the World to *Repentance*, but not the leaſt to *Sin*. Yea, it hath done more to deſtroy Sin, than all the terrors and threatnings of the Law. Well then, though thou art a loſt ſinner, departed from God, once without hope, yet behold the God of Heaven and Earth takes pity on thee; he would not have thee utterly periſh, though thou haſt done ſo much to deſtroy thy ſelf. He calls thee back to him, if thou wilt hearken and obey, and humble thy ſelf before him for thy departure from him, and for all the diſhonour done to his holy Name, and wilt now at length devote thy ſelf to his fear, thou need'ſt not doubt of his favour. So then here's hopes of mercy that may encourage all that hear it to Repentance.

2. And in the next place *there is ſo much love and goodneſs manifeſted in that way, whereby this mercy is procured and tendered*, that may ſerve to work upon the hearts of all but flat Infidels, or brutiſh Sinners that will not be brought ſo much as once to conſider of it, or ſeriouſly regard it. Here is love that paſſeth the full comprehenſion of Men or Angels. Here are myſteries and unſearchable Treaſures of goodneſs: Wherein could God commend his love more to the faln World, than in giving his Son to die for us when we were without help? And what greater love can be ſhewn, than that which Chriſt hath manifeſted in laying down his life for his friends? Nay, for Enemies, that they might be made friends; for the ungodly, that he might reconcile them to God? Vile wretches that we are, no more to be affected with this amazing diſcovery of divine bounty. It's true indeed, there are many things we are yet ignorant of, which makes this love the leſs apprehended in its due dimenſions. Did we know more the infinite Majeſty of God, and our meanneſs compared to him, and how provoking a thing Sin is, and how contrary to his nature; did we know more what ſtrange condeſcenſion there was in God's *manifeſting himſelf in fleſh*, what bitter things our bleſſed Saviour endured for our ſakes; did we know the greatneſs of that miſery he hath ſaved Believers from, and of the Glory he hath prepar'd for them? Did we clearly know theſe and all other heightning Circumſtances, our admiration and aſtoniſhment would

would be unexpressible, as it will be when they are more fully reveal'd to us. But though at present we are much in the dark, yet so much of them we know, that would we duly ponder them, we should even amazed cry out, *Oh the depth of the riches of the Wisdom and Goodness of God!* And what? will not this prevail with thee, oh Back-sliding Sinner, to deal ingenuously and dutifully with that God, who hath revealed such abundant Mercies to win thee to himself? When thou hadst undone thy self, and the Law, which thou hadst broke, had past his sentence upon thee; when thou mightest justly have expected the Execution, behold, without thy seeking a gracious reprieve. And more than so, when thou mightest have had a pursuivant speedily dispatch'd to hurry thee to deserved torment, behold a Saviour interposing to prevent thy ruin. Instead of an unchangeable doom, behold an Act of Oblivion, assuring pardon upon easie conditions. Do but deliberately weigh these things with that seriousness which becomes a Man, and see if there be nothing in them that may perswade thee to a sound repentance for sin, and a speedy return to the God of love. What dost thou think, if thou wast a mean Tenant, and hadst willfully in some discontented fit, pluckt down the House thou liv'st in, and so wast in danger to lie in the open Fields, and to be severely punish'd as thou hadst deserv'd; what now, if after all this, thy Landlord, pitying the misery thou hadst brought thy self to, should courteously come to thee, and offer to build up thy House again in a more sumptuous manner than ever, and set it at a lower Rent, only requiring thee to confess thy former folly, and promise to be so guilty no more, but to live in this thy new built House, and do thy best to keep it in repair, and to accept of his help for what thou could'st not do thy self; and suppose he should even impoverish his own Children thro' his Courtesie to thee, what dost thou think thou should'st now do in this case? Is it an hard matter to determine? would'st thou not think he deserved to be taken for a mad-man that should stand justifying his former offence, would not thankfully accept these courteous offers? I dare say, Reader, if this was thy case, thou art not so foolish or stubborn, but thou would'st quickly resolve what to do, and this mercy and bounty of thy Landlord would even win thy heart for ever, and thou would'st think thou could'st never be sufficiently thankful for his kindness,

kindneſs, nor do enough to make him amends. And would indeed the gentleneſs and liberality of a man, thy fellow-creature, thus affect thee, and ſhall not the loving-kindneſs of God, which hath appeared in Jeſus Chriſt, have much more power upon thee? Doſt thou not believe that our God hath done as much to engage his creatures to himſelf as this comes to? Hath not he ſhewn as much pity and tenderneſs to the ſouls of men, as that would be to the body? If thou doubt, look back upon the ſtate of man, and conſider Gods gracious dealings with him. Did not he by his own folly and diſobedience caſt himſelf out of Paradiſe, and by wilful ſin deface, and even deſtroy the workmanſhip of God? And yet did not God take pity on us *in our blood, when we were caſt forth to the loathing of our perſons?* Did not he contrive the way for our reconciliation to himſelf, and beſeech us to accept of it? And do we not read, that in order to our *enriching*, the Son of God did as it were *impoveriſh* himſelf, and that *we might be fill'd with the fulneſs of God, emptied himſelf, and became of no reputation?* And what an heart muſt that Prodigal Son have, who will not be affected with the kindneſs of his Father, who takes care for, and ſeeks after him, when he had fooliſhly forſaken his Family, and done what he could to put himſelf out of his Fathers care; and is courteouſly entreated to return back to that comfortable ſtate and relation whence he had baniſht himſelf, and upon condition of his return, ſees another better eſtate provided for him, inſtead of that he hath waſted; and finds his arms open to embrace him, againſt whom he had lift up his hand? Methinks if thou believ'ſt that God hath ſhewn ſuch love to man, it cannot but have ſome force upon thee, to bring thee back again to him from whom thou haſt run away, and ſo long kept at a diſtance; and muſt needs prevail with thee to caſt away with grief and ſhame whatever is diſpleaſing to him, and doth eſtrange thee from him. And except thou be an unreaſonable Infidel, thou canſt not but believe it; for it is plainly revealed in Gods holy Word; where alſo we find the greatneſs of his love inculcated, in Gods having regard to us, and firſt looking after us, when we took no thought for our ſelves how to get his favour, 1 *John* 4. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be a propitiation for our ſins*, Rom. 5, 6. 8. *For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly:*

godly. God commendeth his love towards us, in that whilſt we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us. And as Chriſt died to *bring us to God*, ſo the conſideration of this love ſhould draw us to him. By this mercy chiefly we are engaged to *offer up our ſelves a living ſacrifice to God, which is our reaſonable ſervice.* Judge thy ſelf, is it not moſt reaſonable, that we ſhould give up our ſelves to that God, *who ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, and with him freely gives all good things to his people?* Canſt thou then find in thine heart to go on in provoking ſo good a God, and in ſlighting ſuch matchleſs love? If thou canſt, certainly thou haſt baniſht all gratitude, and haſt ſcarce one ſpark of common ingenuity left in thee; yea, thou haſt put off thy manhood, and art become little better than a ſenſeleſs bruit; for what ſhould ſooner work upon a reaſonable creature to love another, than extraordinary and undeſerved kindneſs which he hath received from him? Nay, I might go farther, and tell thee, and that juſtly too, the very beaſts themſelves have more good nature than ſuch a ſtupid, unthankful ſinner as thou: For they have ſome ſenſe of a good turn, and ſome love to thoſe that do it; they know thoſe that feed them and keep them, and uſe not to do them any miſchief. The Dog does not uſe to bite his Maſter, nor the Horſe to kick at him that looks to him. And ſo indeed God himſelf complains of ungrateful men, that when the *Ox knows his owner, and the Aſs his maſters crib, yet they do not know their Maker and Preſerver.* But to be ſhort, let me tell thee plainly, if thou find'ſt thy heart nothing mov'd with all this love that God hath revealed, in ſending *Chriſt to ſave us from the wrath to come*, by his own ſharp ſufferings, I can no way ſee but that thy Caſe is full as bad, yea rather worſe than his, who believes not a word of all I have ſaid. Nay, how indeed can it be imagined that thou believeſt theſe things, if they make no impreſſion upon thee? except thou never uſe to think of them after thou haſt read or heard them: But there's the wonder, if thou doſt believe them, how thou canſt chuſe but think on them, and think again, till at length they work ſome good effect upon thee. But if thou haſt hitherto been ſo ſtrangely careleſs, let me once again deſire thee now at length to ſet upon the ſober thoughts of this unconceiveable mercy manifeſted in the Goſpel, that when thou hadſt even deſt oy'd thy ſelf, God ſhould make haſt to thy help; that he ſhould ſend his own Son to undertake for thee, who was

alſo

alſo willing to this work, and ſhould upon him puniſh thy ſins, and now after all, only calls thee to caſt away thy ſin, and to return to his love; which if thou wilt do, he is willing to be reconcil'd to thee. And ſee if there be not good cauſe that thou ſhould'ſt hearken to theſe invitations, and whether there can be given any juſt or tollerable excuſe for thy diſobedience. If the bittereſt enemy thou hadſt in the World ſhould but ſave thy life when it was in his hands, much more if he ſhould endanger himſelf, or undergo any loſs for thy ſafety, I am confident this would ſoon take off thy ſpleen againſt him, and make thee very ready to be reſtored to his friendſhip. And why the goodneſs of God ſhould not be as prevalent with thee I cannot Imagine, if it be but ſoundly believed, and well thought on.

3. I may farther add, to engage thee to return to the Lord from whom thou art fallen, another argument drawn alſo from the goodneſs of God, ſhewn in the death of Chriſt, as hereby it is moſt clearly diſcovered, *that there's ſome unſpeakable happineſs which was purchaſt by the Lord Jeſus for thoſe that come to God by him*, and to which he invites empty miſerable creatures. Thou canſt not imagine that God makes all this adoe with men for nothing. It was not upon any trivial errand that he ſent his Son into the world; nor are they any ſlight inconſiderable things which he offers to as many as will receive him. It's true, the mercy had been rich and glorious, if Chriſt had only dyed to ſave us from miſery and to have procured of God, that we might have been reduced to nothing, rather than to fry in everlaſting burnings; and no tongue can tell what a priviledge the damned in Hell would account this. But over and above, we read of a *Kingdom of Glory* which Chriſt will give to his followers. And how great this is, judge by the price that was paid for it; not *ſilver or gold*, or any ſuch *corruptible* trifles, but the *precious Blood* of the *Son of God without price*, whoſe utmoſt value cannot be expreſt by Men or Angels; and no more can the glory hereby obtained. For if the Merchant be wiſe, the worth of his Jewel may be gueſt at by the price that he paid for it. Precious is the Soul of Man, and full dear did the redemption thereof coſt, more than the whole world, or ten thouſand ſuch worlds as this: And is not, think you, the Souls portion anſwerable to its own excellency? And the purchaſed Poſſeſſion anſwerable to the greatneſs of that coſt that was laid out for it? When a common Slave may be

freed for a few ſhillings, half a Kingdom will be thought little enough to redeem a captive Prince; and we afterward ſee there is as much difference betwixt them when they have got their liberty, the one ſits on a Dunghil, the other on a Throne. For certain then, Chriſt Jeſus came into the world, and laid down his life to exact thoſe that hearken to him, to the higheſt joy and bliſs of which the nature of man is capable, in delivering them from all ſin, rendring them exactly conformable to God, and placing them in a conſtant full communion with him. He that ſo *loved his Church that he gave himſelf for it, to ſanctifie and cleanſe it*, by all this deſign'd to *preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church*. Upon this account therefore methinks thou ſhould'ſt eaſily be perſwaden to caſt away ſin, which is thy miſery, and return to God, who is thy only life and happineſs, and that no mean happineſs, as I have told thee is evident, amongſt many other reaſons, by the infinite value of the price that was given for it. Oh little do any, even the beſt and wiſeſt on earth, conceive what are the full fruits of Chriſts Blood; what miracles of divine love thoſe are, which through endleſs millions of ages, will keep alive the admiration, joy and praiſe of Angels and Saints; and fill the mouths of Chriſts Redeemed ones with continual thankfulneſs, for that wiſdom and mercy which contriv'd and wrought their delivery and exaltation. So that you ſee, laying theſe things together, the death of Chriſt, as diſcovering the mercy of God, lays the greateſt engagment that can be upon the Sons of Men, to break off their ſins and return to the obedience and love of God: in that there is ſo much mercy procured and tendred as may beget hope, and encourage to repentance, which is not like to be rejected; and as there is ſo great love expreſt, as may well call for the return of love, and even ſoften the moſt ſtony heart; and as it diſcovers ſo great a bleſſedneſs to be had in God through Chriſt, as may prevail with all that love themſelves, to make out after it, and depart from ſin, which alone can keep them from it. And that's the ſecond Conſideration which the death of Chriſt helps us to, in order to the working of a kindly repentance, namely the great goodneſs of God hereby revealed to poor ſinners.

3. From all that hath been ſaid, will more cleary appear the hainous nature of ſin, as a farther motive to Repentance, *in that it is a contradiction to all this love of God, and an undervaluing of the greateſt mercy that was ever beſtow'd upon the world*;

world; being in effect a trampling underfoot of the Blood of the Lord Jesus, whereby we should be sanctified. And hereby I mean those sins which have been committed since men heard of the Gospel. For as the evil of sin did appear in the greatness of those sufferings which Christ undergoe to procure a pardon, so these his sufferings do exceedingly aggravate their sins, who have continued in them, after they have been told again and again what their Saviour hath done to make satisfaction for them, if they would not undervalue and despise it. Oh how have you made a shift so often to hear and read of the life and death of Christ, and yet have done all that in you lies to cross the end of his coming into world, and to make his Death of none effect to you, whilst yet you pretend to believe that his design was wholly for your good? Oh unthankful wretches, to make such a requital for such unvaluable love! As if you studied how you might most dishonour and displease him, who thought not his own life too dear to lay down for you. Could you see him upon the Cross wounded, torn, and bruised for your sakes, and could you think of no other recompence but to give him fresh wounds by your wilful sins? Did he once *dispise the shame and endure the Cross* for you, and could you find in your hearts again to *put him to an open shame*, and as it were *crucifie him afresh*? Did he indeed deserve such dealing as this at your hands? Bethink thy self, Reader, whether this hath not been thy case. Hast thou not liv'd in those sins which Christ died to deliver thee from? And what hast thou thereby done less than proclaim, *That* there is more to be got by thy lusts than by thy Saviour, *that* it's better to remain in this polluted corrupt estate than to be wash'd in the blood of Christ, *whereby our consciences are purged from dead works to serve the living God*? And did they vilifie Christ more, that contemn'd him, jeer'd him, and put him to death? If thou take thy fleshly pleasures, and worldly profits, to be of greater advantage than any thing that can accrue to thee from Christs Death, dost thou not think as basely of him as any of his Crucifiers did? And hadst thou been there with this frame of heart, is it not most likely thou would'st have joyned with them, whatever thou maist now think? As they hated Christ because he told them the truth, and reprov'd them for sin, and therefore did all they could to rid themselves of one, whose Preaching and Presence was such a burthen to them, so dost thou appear in effect an hater of

Christ, his life and doctrin, whilst thou walkest so flatly contrary thereto. And what's this less than desiring that there was no God nor Christ to govern and judge thee, no such Rule as the Gospel to be thy Guide? Nay, let me tell thee, thou who hast profest thy self a *Christian*, and yet hast behav'd thy self thus unworthily toward Christ, thou art herein more guilty than the *Jews* themselves; for what they did was very much out of ignorance, but thou after thou hast known he is the Son of God, and that he laid down his life for our sins, hast manifested all this contempt of him, and rejected him from being thy Saviour, whilst thou would'st not be saved by him from thy reigning Lusts, which thou hast loved more than him, as *Judas* loved the Mony, for which he was hired to betray him. After thou hast known of that friendship which by the Cross of Christ was shewn to the ruined World, yet thou hast been an *enemy to this Cross*, whilst *thou hast made thy Belly thy God, and minded earthly things*; whilst thou hast delightfully liv'd in the practice of any known sin. What then, were the *Jews prick'd to the Heart*, when they were convinc'd that they had *crucified that Jesus, whom God had made Lord and Christ?*. And shall it not have the same effect on thee, to consider thou hast been guilty in some sort of the same wickedness, and hast shewn forth the very same Spirit that was in them? For think not thy self more blameless, because thou never saw'st Christ, nor had'st any hand in his Death, nor didst joyn with his Enemies in accusing, condemning and reproaching him, but cry'st against them as Monsters of Men, that persecuted the most spotless Innocence with such savage fierceness: for all this while thy guilt may be as great as theirs, whilst thou hast as great an enmity against the Image of Christ, and the Law of Christ, as they had against his Person. And that thou dost not wound him, and spit in his face, is not from the goodness of thy nature, but because he is out of thy reach: for were he now before thee, and could it gratifie thy lusts so to deal with him, it's much to be feared thou would'st not stick at it. Whilest the *Pharisees* condemned their Fore-fathers for the killing the Prophets, they followed them in the very same sin. And suppose a Father had two Sons, the one at Man's estate, the other an Infant, and the elder of these by following wicked courses should break his Fathers heart, and occasion his death; and the younger when he grows up, should lead the very same life

that

that the other did, but yet ſhould take on him very much to condemn his Brother for being ſo diſobedient and hard-hearted, as to bring his Father to the Grave; is it not plain for all this, that had he been in his Brothers ſtead he would have done the ſame that he did; Since he alſo takes thoſe courſes which were ſo grievous to his Father? Thus it is to be remembred that Sin was that which put Chriſt to death as well as the *Jews*. And this is it thou loveſt, tho' thou ſeemeſt to hate *them*. And as thoſe *Jews* put his body to pain by their cruelties, ſo doſt thou grieve his Spirit by thy wickedneſs. And know, he takes it as hainouſly from thee, that thou ſhould'ſt thus diſpleaſe him, as he did from them that they ſhould perſecute him to the Death. Nor art thou like to get a pardon at any eaſier rates than they, even no other way, than *looking on him whom thou by thy ſins haſt pierced*, and *bitterly mourning* for this thy bloodineſs and ingratitude. What ſay'ſt thou then after all this? Canſt thou without tears and groans look back upon all the diſorders of thy life, whereby thou haſt done all that in thee lay, to make thoſe wounds of thy tender compaſſionate Saviour bleed afreſh, which he firſt received upon thy account? I believe thou thought'ſt not of this: no, if thou hadſt, one would think thou could'ſt never have done it. Thy deſign only was to pleaſe thy fleſh by all thy ſenſual courſes; thou waſt only full of projects to maintain and raiſe thy ſelf and thy poſterity by all thy wordly deſigns and buſineſſes, wherewith thro' thy whole life thou haſt been ſo ſwallowed up. But thou ſeeſt how the caſe ſtands, that this while thou haſt been moſt vilely rejecting, and even trampling upon the Lord Jeſus, who would have brought thee off from thy vain converſation, from all thy ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and hath followed thee with his Word and Spirit to that end, and hath preſt thee with arguments drawn from his matchleſs love, diſcovered by his Death, and hath beſought thee to regard him, yea, to take pity on thy ſelf, but thou haſt made light of all, and haſt gone as ſecurely and quietly in the ways of ſin, as if thou hadſt never heard what ſin did upon Chriſt. And what? art thou reſolved to do ſo ſtill? Shall nothing ſtop thee in thy career? Wilt thou not ſtay to hearken what a way it is thou walkeſt in, nor think what unvaluable Mercies thou all this while treadeſt under feet? Haſt thou not yet ſufficiently abuſed thy Redeemers love and patience? Haſt thou not

made him wait long enough in vain? Wilt thou ſtill make ſhew of deafneſs to all thoſe meſſages he ſends thee? If ſo, yet be thou ſure of this, thou ſhalt not be able to ſay at thy appearance before him, that thou never knew'ſt that ſin was ſuch an evil thing, and ſo provoking to him; for beſide all other warnings that thou haſt had, I now declare to thee who readeſt or heareſt theſe words, that if thou ſtill continueſt in thy looſe ungodly life, living in ſwearing, curſing, drunkenneſs, whoredom, covetouſneſs, cozening, malice, or any other known ſin, and wilfully neglecteſt thy duty to God, going whole days without Prayer or reading God's Word, profaning the Lord's Day, neglecting Sacraments, if thou hold'ſt on this courſe, thou doſt no better than *again crucifie and deny the Lord that bought thee*, and ſo haſt no reaſon to complain if thou fall under the ſame condemnation, which thou thy ſelf wilt acknowledge, *Judas* and *Pilate*, and the reſt of Chriſt's Enemies deſerve; and therefore that thou maiſt not be found amongſt them, loaded with the ſame guilt at Judgment, I do once again in the name of Chriſt beſeech thee with all ſpeed to change thy heart and life, and uſe all means appointed to that end, and after all thy wandrings, now at length *return to him the good Shepherd of Souls, who laid down his life for his Sheep.*

4. Laſtly, The Death of Chriſt may powerfully move thee to repent of, and forſake all ſin, as it holds forth this weighty, but ſad truth, *that all thoſe who are deſpiſers of his Death, and by living and dying in their ſins, reap no ſaving benefit by it, ſhall in their own perſons undergo unſupportable torments for this their unbelief, and wilful impenitence.* If thou believeſt the Goſpel, thou canſt not but acknowledge, that all men had been in a moſt conſiderable condition if Chriſt had not died; and thou wilt grant that ſin is a moſt perilous miſchievous thing, and an unſpeakable provocation to the moſt holy God, ſince nothing could pleaſe his wrath but the Death of Chriſt, without whoſe blood ſhed we had obtain'd no remiſſion: And what then doſt thou think is like to be thy caſe, if through thy own fault, thou are never the better for all Chriſt hath done, but muſt thy ſelf anſwer for thy ſins, and bear the puniſhment they have deſerved? Let the Death of Chriſt, I ſay, inſtruct thee what thou are like to expect if this be thy condition. *If*, as he himſelf ſpeaks, *ſuch things were done to the the green tree, what ſhall be done to the dry?* If he who was without the leaſt ſtain of original or

actual

actual sin, drank such a bitter Cup; when he stood in our stead, what will be the portion of their Cup, who, being poor frail creatures, must make satisfaction for their own sins? How will they ever hold up under the load of God's hottest wrath, when he shall meet them in Judgment, and cause his fury to rest upon them? And above all, thy impenitent, obstinate continuance in sin, and contempt of Christ, will lye heaviest upon thee in the day of vengeance. These sins against the Gospel, against Mercy, the greatest and freest mercy, are most provoking to God, most inexcusable in themselves, and will therefore prove most pernicious to Sinners. Methinks then, if thou hadst any regard to thy self, to thy own ease and comfort, this should make thee out of love with sin, to consider how dear it's like to cost thee, how pleasant soever it may now seem. It was not for nothing that Christ felt so much sorrow and pain, as thou shalt know to thy everlasting woe, if thou pluck the heavy judgments of God on thy head, by slighting him who would have kept them from off thee. Assure thy self, poor sinner, as bold and confident as now thou art, thou wilt never be able to contest with that wrath, which exercised even the strength of Christ to bear it; thou art never like to go away lightly with that which he felt so heavy. For shame at length leave thy foolish plea, that God will be more merciful than to torment his creatures: for hast thou not seen how he bruised his own Son, who never offended him, how he *bruised him*, I say, *for our iniquities*, and will he then spare thee, who in thy own person hast been a most stubborn hard-hearted Rebel, and hast cast away with loathing the mercies that were again and again prest upon thee? Thou hast no reason for such fond expectations. What, wilt thou tell Christ at Judgment, that thou didst not believe that ever God would be so severe, as to punish thee so dreadfully and everlastingly as his Word threatned? And that therefore thou took'st somewhat more liberty in thy life than he allowed thee? Darest thou come with such a Plea as this? But if thou should'st, what wilt thou answer to Christ, when he shall lay open what he underwent for thy sake, and how thou madest light of his love? Will not this soon silence thee? If he ask thee whether thou hadst not evidence and proof enough of the evil and danger that was in sin, by his suffering so much for others transgressions, wilt thou have any pretence left to justifie thy self? I may perhaps afterward

ward urge this consideration, but I mention it now as offered to us by the sufferings of Christ, which do most plainly declare, that doleful are the miseries prepared for those that get no good by him, but die in their sins; which may bring all that are not in love with damnation, out of love with that sin which will at length plunge them into it. And thus you see how many motives to true repentance are afforded us from the serious meditation on the Cross and Passion of Christ, as this discovers to us the hainous nature of sin: and as there is such mercy and love hereby reveal'd, as may work upon, and reclaim all that are ingenuous, grateful, or wise for themselves; and as this makes sin more monstrously vile, which shall be committed against such mercy; and as it shews that all men living in sin, dying out of Christ, are like to undergo unsufferable torments for their obstinacy. And thus I have finish'd the second qualification which is necessary to all worthy Communicants, to wit, True Repentance, an unfeigned sorrow for, a detestation of, and a turning from all willful sin in Heart and life.

CHAP. IV.

III. *A right remembring the great end of the Death of Christ to redeem us from all iniquity, and sanctifie us. Of Faith and Covenanting with Christ.*

IT must needs be, that if we rightly remember the Death of Christ in the Sacrament, we must then remember to what end and purpose this was: and this we shall plainly find in Scripture to be, that he might redeem Man from that sinful miserable state he was fain into, and restore him to a state of holiness and happiness in the enjoyment of God from whom he was fain. So 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. *For Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, Eph.* 2. 16, 17, 18. *Heb.* 7. 25. And this is the meaning of all those places which speak of the *Redemption* we have obtain'd by Christ, if we take it in its largest signification. And to this purpose he offers himself to Men to be their Redeemer, to confer upon them pardon of their sin, and give them victory over all their corruptions, and the temptations of *Satan*, and to lead them by his Spirit through

through this dangerous world, till he ſhall bring them with triumph into the *Kingdom of the Father*. Now hence it follows, *that no Man can remember Chriſt as he ought, who will not receive him to theſe ends and purpoſes for which he offers himſelf*, which is our effectual believing in him. For is he a fit man to celebrate Chriſts remembrance, who hath no love for him, nor any liking to his undertaking, nor will be perſwaded to comply therewith? And ſuch are all they who reject him and the tenders of his mercy, except they might have them in their own way, and that do flatly contradict his deſign in becoming our Mediator, by continuing ſtill in their natural corrupt eſtate, alienated from God, and liable to his wrath; that is, who are unbelievers. So that here I mean no more than, *That without Faith in Chriſt we cannot rightly remember him*, without we ſo believe that he is the only Saviour of Mankind, that we reſolve, he, and none but he, ſhall be our Saviour, in the way that he himſelf thinks fit. But to make it yet plainer, how unfit all ſuch rejecters of Chriſt are to come to this holy Supper, conſider, that our receiving of the Sacrament is appointed to be on our part, as a token and ſign of our making and renewing our Covenant with God in Chriſt, in which, if we be ſincere, then it is a ſeal on Gods part, of his being in Covenant with us; a confirmation of our belief, that he will be our God, and fulfil all his promiſes to us; and herein he gives us an earneſt and pledge of the future bleſſings which we ſhall receive from him through his Son, as I ſhall ſhew under the next Head. Does it not then hence appear, that all thoſe who will not be held in any ſuch Covenant, are moſt unfit perſons to come to this Sacrament? the very deſign of our coming to which, is to ſhew that we are a people in Covenant with God: and by this ſolemn action, taking and eating the Bread, and drinking the Wine, we are to teſtifie that we are ſo, and do hereby bind our ſelves ſo to remain. What would this be, but with much formality to mock that God who *will not be mocked*, and even to run upon our own damnation, provoking the Lord to deſtroy thoſe, who ſo impudently take his name in vain? By this practice Men are guilty of a down-right lye, yea, of groſſeſt Perjury: for Chriſt in effect ſaith, *All you, and you only that take me for your Lord and Saviour, come and partake of this Feaſt which I have appointed in remembrance of the Redemption I have wrought for you*, and yet multitudes who will not take him for their

Lord

Lord to rule over them, nor *will be saved from their sins* by him, thrust in, and partake of this Supper. This is just as if a General of an Army, having a mind to single out some of his Soldiers for some design, should say, *All you that are willing to go along with me, hold up your hands*, and yet many should hold up their hands who refuse to go; what would this be but to befool themselves and abuse their Leader? Or, as if it at the first appointment of the Passeover it had been commanded, that they, and they only should eat of the Paschal Lamb, who would go out of *Egypt* into *Canaan*, under the conduct of *Moses*; and yet many of the *Israelites* should prepare and eat it, either because they were hungry, or because they would do as the rest did, without ever thinking what was the meaning of this action, or what they hereby engag'd themselves to, being resolved still to continue in *Egypt*, neither caring for *Moses*, nor the *Canaan* he should lead them to. Thus when Christ commands, that that all those who will depart out of the *Egyptian* Bondage they are in to sin and *Satan*, and be guided by him through the Wilderness of this World, till they come to the heavenly *Canaan*, that they should appear at a Feast which he hath made on purpose to entertain them, there throng in others to this Table, who have no *Right to eat thereat*, as having no resolutions to leave their sin, and thus to follow Christ, who would lead them to glory. These are the men that are found without their *wedding Garment*, whom the Master of the Feast will draw out from amongst the rest, and dispose of them to a place and company more suitable for them, as you may read, *Mat.* 22. 10, 11, 12, 13. So that I hope you see that it's a most unsuitable and unlawful thing for any man to address himself to this Ordinance, who is not heartily in Covenant with God, since herein he professeth himself to be so, and therefore if he be not, he will be found a Lyar both to God and Man.

But since this is made by some the very nature and design of the Lord's Supper to be a Fœderal Rite, or an action testifying and confirming a Covenant betwixt God and Man, as in the Eastern and other Countries they were wont so ratifie their Leagues by feasting together; and as they who eat of the Sacrifices offered to Devils, thereby had fellowship with Devils, as the *Jews* by eating of their Sacrifices, held Communion with, and profest subjection to God, as you may see them parallell'd, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

Since

Since I ſay, this is on mans part a ſign of his being in Covenant with God; I ſhall ſomewhat fuller explain what this Covenant is, that you may underſtand whether you are cordially entred thereinto, and are willing to continue in it, that ſo you may know whether you are like to be entertained as worthy gueſts at the Lord's Table, which is proper to his Covenant-people.

In a word then, the Covenant which we renew at the Lord's Supper, is the very ſame with that you were entred into by Baptiſm, when you were baptized in the name of (and thereby engaged to) the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and therefore obliged to thoſe duties which we owe to God in the ſeveral relations wherein he ſtands to us, which are denoted by the Perſons of the ſacred Trinity: That is, we are hereby oblig'd to acknowledge God the Father to be our Creator and Preſerver, and therefore to behave our ſelves as his Creatures ought, ſubmitting our ſelves to his Commands and Providences, and placing our happineſs in pleaſing him, and enjoying his love; God the Son made man, that is, Jeſus Chriſt, we are hereby bound to take for our only Saviour, through whom alone we hope for the pardon of our offences, and for ability to ſerve and pleaſe God, and for acceptance and happineſs with him: And God the Holy Ghoſt we promiſe to take for our Sanctifier, to have our Souls by him renewed after the Image of God, and thoſe Graces given into us, which were purchaſt for us by Chriſt, and the evidences of God's love, and of our to our Conſciences; the Holy Word alſo which he inſpir'd the Prophets and Apoſtles to write, we are hereby engag'd to take for the Rule of our Faith and Life. And this is your entring into Covenant with, and being conſecrated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; which doth neceſſarily ſuppoſe and include our renouncing the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil, which is in effect the ſame with Repentance for ſin, which I ſpoke to largely under the laſt Head: For he who is humbled for, and reſolved to forſake ſin, doth hereby renounce his fleſh, which is pleas'd with ſin, and will not make carnal Self his chief end and he alſo renounceth the World, which is the fuel and food of his luſts, all that wherwith the carnal part is gratified, as matters of pleaſure, profit, honour, and the like, not regarding them as means to his happineſs; and he renounceth the Devil, who by temptations drawn from theſe worldly things, would

entice

entice him to ſin, and that wicked nature alſo which does the office of a Tempter with him. All you then, who have been baptized into the Chriſtian Faith, are thereby bound to take God for your Supreme Governour and chief Happineſs; and Jeſus Chriſt for your Mediator, and way to the Father; and the Holy Spirit for your Sanctifier and Guide. And ſince you were Infants when you were thus firſt dedicated to God, it behoves you that are now come to the uſe of reaſon, and are reſolved by the Grace of God, to be ſtedfaſt in this Holy Covenant, to come to the Lord's Table, and there profeſs theſe reſolutions, and by the receiving of this Sacrament in the preſence of the heart-ſearching God, and all your Fellow-Chriſtians, to renew your engagement, that you will take God for your God, and that you will be his people. Since then it is ſo plain, that they, and they only, are worthy Communicants, who have in heart made this Covenant with God in Chriſt, which they are to profeſs, ſolemnize, and confirm, by eating and drinking the Sacramental Bread and Wine, it remains, that all, who would not venture damnation, by doing this unworthily, ought to enter into a faithful Examination of themſelves, whether indeed this be their condition and frame of heart, or not. And let me beſeech thee, Reader, faithfully to ſet upon this Work, as a buſineſs of the greateſt concernment that ever thou hadſt to do in thy life; namely, to ſee that thou art ſincerely in Covenant with God through his Son, for this is the very heart and ſubſtance of Religion, the Sum of all Chriſtianity, and that upon which thy everlaſting happineſs wholly depends; know but this once, and thou mayeſt know that Heaven will be thy portion, ſhouldſt thou dye at this hour.

And here, that I may do what in me lies to help thee to the true knowledge of thy ſelf, let me firſt adviſe thee to look carefully into thy own heart, for that's thy ſureſt way, if thou art but well acquainted with the workings thereof and wilt deal impartially. And in this ſearching into the ſtate and temper of thy Soul, I would would wiſh thee to put theſe queſtions to thy ſelf which I ſhall ask thee, and to give in a true anſwer.

I demand of thee then, what is that great good on which thou haſt placed thy higheſt love? The obtaining of which thou haſt made the great buſineſs of thy life, and which if thou could'ſt but attain to, thou believeſt thou ſhould'ſt be

ſatisfied

ſatisfied and made perfectly happy? Canſt thou ſay, and that truly, that God hath the utmoſt place in thy heart, that his authority ſways thee moſt, and that, for the main, all things that concern thee are regarded but in order to him? Doſt thou make it thy principal ſtudy and trade to pleaſe him? And doſt thou count of nothing as fit to make thee a portion but his everlaſting love? If it be thus with thee, then thou may'ſt ſafely conclude that indeed thou haſt made God thy chief end. But enquire diligently whether it be not quite otherwiſe, and whether thou haſt not ſet up thy *ſelf* in a diſtinction from God, becoming thy own Idol? Art thou not poſſeſt with high thoughts of thy *ſelf*? Loving and admiring thy *ſelf*, ſeparate from him who gave thee thy being? It's true, the man who is moſt heartily devoted to God, hath the greateſt love and veneration of himſelf, but it is as he is God's creature; and it is his Soul which hath his higheſt eſteem; and he ſeeks his happineſs by ſubjecting himſelf to God, and therefore prefers, adores, and admires God infinitely above himſelf, regarding himſelf in and for God, accounting it the end of his being to ſerve his Makers will, and deſiring no other felicity, than the feeling of that love of God which he manifeſts to all ſuch humble obedient ones. But the carnal man, though he may have ſome reverence for God, and may yield him ſome tribute of ſervice, ſome Prayers, ſome Praiſes, and ſome Subjection, yet all this is but in order to his *carnal ſelf*, for the procuring for it ſuch things as cannot be had without God; ſo that God is regarded but as a means to *ſelf*, and with a reſpect hereto is all his ſervice of God, for the manner and meaſures of it, framed and limited. Thus may the covetous man, whoſe chief end is to enrich *himſelf*, pray to God for riches, praiſe him for riches, be ſo far juſt and charitable as he thinks may forward his thriving; yea, he may be in all things ſo far religious as hinders not his chief end; but let this once come in competition with any duty to God, ſo that by ſerving him he ſhould impoveriſh himſelf, you ſhall ſoon perceive what is his God, and what rules him moſt, as you have an example in the young man that came to Chriſt, *Mat.* 19. 21, 22. wherefore examine, I ſay, whether thou art not a lover of thy ſelf more than God. Does not thy own will and fancy ordinarily guide thee in thy actions and affairs; and is not that courſe taken which moſt conduceth to the intereſt of thy fleſh? ſhould'ſt thou not then account thy ſelf well enough

enough provid for, if thou wast but compleatly furnish'd with all that in the World, which leads to the accomplishing and gratifying of man as he is an inhabitant of the Earth? And is not thy labour most for, thy desire after, thy delight in such things as tend to the pleasing and advancing thy self in the world? Hast thou not been most taken up in making Provisions for thy flesh, thinking with thy self, that to be happy was to live a merry life, and take thine ease and pleasure, or else to get more mony than thy Neighbours, and to have more respect and esteem, that where ever thou goest thou maist be praised and admired? Hast thou not taken those for the happiest men that have stood in thy way, and kept thee from the like? Reader, what saith thy Conscience to this? Do but hearken, and it will speak plain, and tell the truth. Sure thou canst not but know what thou makest the great end of thy life, what it is for that thou desirest to stay in the world; what thou risest for every morning, and for what thou goest into this company, and that, and takest all thy Journeys, and wholly employest thy hands and head. All this is is either for God, or for carnal self principally; for there cannot be two chief ends. And if thou art one that lievest to, and Idolizest thy self, for shame take not on thee to love God above all, as thou usest to do: for indeed thou dost not truly and properly take him to be God, not thy God.

Again, Let me ask thee, hast thou ever found in thy Soul powerful and prevalent convictions, that thou hast no way to attain true happiness, not to escape misery, but by the Lord Jesus Christ? And hast thou thereupon heartily consented to his offers, and to the conditions he hath appointed for the saving of thy Soul, being willing to be taught and govern'd by him, only hoping for pardon of sin, grace, and glory to be given to thee by God through him, and for his sake? Put the question to thine own heart, didst thou ever yet see an absolute necessity of Christ, so that thou tookest thy self for an undone creature without him? And hath thy Soul been kindly and thankfully affected with this amazing mystery of love, that God hath shewn to poor helpless Sinners through his Son? Hath it warmed and rejoyced thy heart to consider it? Thus in some good measure will it be with thee, if thou art a true Believer in Christ. And this depends upon the former; for if thou hast taken the everlasting enjoyment of God for thy chief happiness, thou wilt

then

then be ready to comply with that way which leads to this end, and that's only shewed to us in and by Christ, who is himself the *way to the Father*, and *none can come to God but by him*. And when thou art once throughly perswaded of this, thou canst not but willingly resign thy self to him, consenting to be sav'd by him, on what terms, and in what way he shall appoint and prescribe to thee; and this firm and prevalent consent of thy Soul is true and saving Faith, to which the pardon of sins and everlasting life is promised. This is *coming to Christ*, *receiving him*, and several other ways it's exprest in Scripture, but most commonly call'd our believing in *him*, which includes in it, our trusting to him for all mercy, our hearkning to his teachings, and our resolutions seriously to obey his commands, and imitate his example. Examine thy self well then, whether thou hast such a sound faith wrought in thee or not. Hast thou not rather contented thy self with a sluggish unfruitful belief, that Christ is the Saviour of the World, without minding thy own particular need which thou standest in of him, nor ever making enquiry what he would have thee do to be saved? Have not thine Eyes been so far blinded, that thou never yet saw'st so much evil in sin as should make thee look out for a deliverer, and prize him who hath done so much to redeem thee? But canst make shift well enough to live without Christ, so thou canst but get those things which now thou takest to be more useful for thee, in order to thy happiness? Thus will it be with thee, if thou hast set thy heart upon the pleasing and advancing of thy carnal self; thou art not then like to see any great need of Christ, or any excellency in him that should make him desirable: for he came not into the world to help carnal wretches to the enjoyment of their Idols, but to turn their hearts off them, to the living and true God. And therefore as they who have chose this God for their portion, do make it their great work to get an interest in Christ the Mediator, and do live upon, and make use of him to bring them to their portion, so they that have made the pleasing of their flesh with any worldly thing their ultimate end, they are diligent in the using of all means that may help on this their base end. The voluptous brutish sinners hunt after sensual pleasures in their Meat and Drink, wantonness, sloth, excessive sports, and merry jovial company. The covetous man, who hath a greedy insatiable fancy to gratifie, wholly

ſpends himſelf in treaſuring up wealth, and he taſtes ſweetneſs in nothing but his gains. His Bonds, and Bills, and Leaſes, are better things to him than the Covenant of Grace; and his Houſes and Lands and Mony more precious than the Blood of Chriſt. And ſo the proud and ambitious, that would fain have much eſteem and honour in the world, (which is the moſt natural vice to almoſt every man) they purſue their deſign, by labouring to get into places, to make great Men their friends; recommending themſelves to the world, by their ſumptuous Houſes, great Retinues, rich Cloaths, gentile deportment, and the like braveries; others by their ſtrength, beauty, wit, learning, and the like Accompliſhments of Body or Mind. Thus you ſee, according to the nature of mens happineſs, they make uſe of means to reach it. Search well therefore, whether ſome of theſe or the like empty trifles have not been more ſet by, and laboured for, than Chriſt himſelf; if ſo, never ſay thou takeſt him for thy Mediator; for it is apparent, thou doſt not make him ſo. No, but thoſe things are indeed thy Mediators, which thou makeſt uſe of to accompliſh thy ſelfiſh deſigns. And hereby thou doſt in effect as much reject and vilifie Chriſt, as if thou didſt revolt from him, and take *Mahomet* for thy Saviour. Oh beware of deceiving thy ſelf in this point, which is ſo eaſie, ſo common, and dangerous, to talk of truſting and relying on Chriſt, whileſt the heart relyes moſt upon ſome outward enjoyment to bring it to the happineſs it ſeeks for, and the moſt they look for from Chriſt is, to have him keep them from Hell, after they have been all their days gratifying their luſts, and ſerving the Devil, but they never think of improving him as a Mediator betwixt God and their Souls, expecting all their mercies of this life and the next, to come by him; and by him offering up all their ſervices to God. Wherefore I beſeech you to remember, that nothing will prove you ſincerely in Covenant with Chriſt as one of his living Members, but a thorow, ſtedfaſt willingneſs to be brought to happineſs by him in his own way, and let it be your care to examine whether you are thus heartily willing.

And then laſtly, haſt thou ſubmitted thy Soul to the powerful workings of the Holy Ghoſt, to renew and regenerate thee? Haſt thou faithfully rendered up thy ſelf to him, to be transformed into the divine likeneſs, to have thy corruptions purged away, and all ſaving Graces implanted in thee?

It is the Office of the Holy Ghost to carry on Christ's interest in the Souls of Men, to *fulfil all the pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power*, to bring them to the Father by the Son. No man can cry *Abba Father*, and be filled with a childlike disposition and nature, but he who hath received this Spirit of adoption; and no man can *call Jesus Lord*, and be heartily subject to him, but by the help of this Almighty Spirit. He shews men the vanity of the Creature, and the goodness, the fulness, and all-sufficiency of God, and enables the heart firmly to cleave to him: He convinces men of sin, and shews them the odiousness and danger of it, and discovers to them a Saviour, by whom they may be redeemed from all their iniquities from the dominion, and from the condemnation of sin: And he begets in the Soul a saving faith, making men not only willing, but earnestly desirous to accept of Christ to both these ends. Reflect upon thy self then, whether thou hast experienced any such workings in thy Soul or not, whether thou art changed by this divine power into a new and heavenly nature, and art hereby become *a new creature, as all in Christ are, old things being done away.* Hast thou ever found the vigorous and warm movings of this holy Spirit upon thy heart, conveying light and life to thy dark Soul, *dead in trespasses* and *sins*? Hast thou carefully cherished these motions, and complied with this sanctifying work, which spreads it self through the whole man? And art thou willing to be govern'd by him, to hearken to his voice within thee, and to that word which was inspired by him to be a Lamp to this feet? If these things be so, then indeed thou hast performed the engagement that was laid upon thee, by being baptized into the Name of the Holy Ghost. But call thy self to account, whether it hath been quite otherwise with thee. Dost thou not still remain in the carnal selfish state, alienated from the life of God through a blind mind, and a wicked stubborn will, being still at enmity with him? Hast thou not quenched the Spirit, and stifled convictions, and resisted his operations upon thy Soul? Art thou not rather guided by the seducing Spirit, and thy own unmortified lusts? Do not these still remain in strength and power, so that whatever they draw thee to, must be done, let the Word and Conscience say what they will? If it be thus, never boast of having God to be thy Maker, nor Christ thy Redeemer; for if thou art not sanctified by the Holy Ghost,

God will never own thee for his, who accepts of none but an holy people.

Thus by looking carefully into your hearts, you may discern whether you are truly in Covenant with God or not. And if this seem any matter of difficulty, to know what your hearts are; or rather, lest you should pretend your hearts are thus right, when it is no such thing, I shall give one instance more, whereby you may know how you stand related to God, and that is by the consideration of your lives and conversations: for, if you are sincerely devoted to God in your hearts, then you must needs shew it in the holiness of your lives, which is nothing else but the keeping of that Covenant which is made betwixt God and the Soul. If you do indeed *follow after holiness*, it's a sign you account it your chief happiness *to see God*. If you are patient and *unwearied in well doing*, it's a sign you seek for *honour and glory* with God. And if you keep the Commandments of Christ, *endeavouring to walk as he walk'd*, it's manifest that you love him and believe in him. *If you bring forth much fruit, hereby you and all may know that you are Christ's Disciples, that you are living branches of him, the true Vine; then have you received Christ, if you walk in him.* And if you shew forth the fruits of the Spirit in your lives, it's a true token that his Graces are sown in your hearts. *If you are led by, and walk after the Spirit*, then indeed the Spirit is with and in you, and *you live in him, Gal.* 5. 25. But on the other hand, it's as certain thou art a stranger and alien from this Covenant I have before described, if thou be one that serveſt the Devil rather than the true God. Make what profession thou wilt to love God, and believe in Christ, if thou allowest thy self in any one known, all thy great pretences will at length come to nothing. What, doth that man *love the Lord, who doth not hate evil*? Nay, who delights in that which the Lord abhors, and wherewith he is griev'd and provok'd to fury? Doth he take Christ for his Lord, who will not be obedient to him? Doth he take him for his Physician, who would not be healed, but had rather keep his Diseases? Beware as thou loveſt thy Soul, of that dangerous mistake, that thy belief in Christ may serve turn well enough for thy Salvation, without an holy life; for if thou leadeſt not an holy life, its most certain thou dost not truly believe in Christ. For it is not enough to prove thee such a Believer as shall be saved, to trust in Christ's merits,

rits, and hope God will be merciful to thee for his ſake, but it is alſo of abſolute neceſſity that thou believe in him as a Prophet, and King, and accept of him to teach and govern thee, if ever thou hope for any ſaving benefit by him; and therefore thou muſt believe his Promiſes and Threatnings, and faithfully endeavour to yield an univerſal obedience to his Commands, and to follow his footſteps: So that to ſay thou haſt a good faith in Chriſt whilſt thou liveſt an ungodly life, is as flat a contradiction as to ſay, thou art faithful to thy Prince, whilſt thou riſeſt up in Arms againſt him; and ſo much as an Oath of Allegiance and Fidelity to their Soveraign doth tye Men from Rebellion, ſo much doth Saving Faith bind them againſt wickedneſs. And to talk of keeping thy Faith firm whilſt thou liveſt in diſobedience to thy Lord, is as if a Wife ſhould ſay, ſhe was careful in keeping her Marriage-Covenant whilſt ſhe lived in open Adultery. Thus much here I was willing to ſpeak of this, that thou maiſt be the more plainly convinc'd, that if thou liveſt in, or loveſt any ſin, and wilt not leave it, though God's Word and thy own Conſcience condemn thee for it, that then thou art not ſincerely in Covenant with God. Wherefore look well into thy life, conſider thy ways how thou behaveſt thy ſelf towards God and Man, and in all thy carriage in the World. Art thou not a wilful neglecter of thy duty to thy Maker, living without a ſenſe or acknowledgment of him in all thy ways, not ſo much as once in a day, or perhaps in a whole week, ſetting thy ſelf ſeriouſly to pray to him in thy Family or Cloſet, not taking any pleaſure in reading his word, or in thinking and ſpeaking of him to thy own and others advantage? Doſt thou not profane the Lord's day, and turn thy back with contempt upon the Ordinances of God? Art thou not us'd to ſwearing, curſing, and taking the holy Name of God in vain in thy common diſcourſe? Or art thou guilty of lying, cozenage, injuſtice in thy trading and dealing with Men, of oppreſſion and unmercifulneſs to the Poor? Doſt thou not live in envy and malice, allowing thy ſelf in railing, backbiting and ſlandering? Or, doſt thou riotouſly abuſe the good Creatures of God, eating and drinking to exceſs, unfitting thy ſelf for God's ſervice, and ſtudying only to pleaſe thy palate? Doſt thou not pollute thy Soul with wanton thoughts, diſcourſes and unclean practices? Doſt thou not miſ-ſpend thy time in idleneſs and vanity, careleſly waſting

precious hours that ſhould be improved for God's honour, by getting or doing good? Doſt thou not give way to thy Pride in thy diſcourſe, carriage or attire, laviſhing Mony and time for the gratifying of this baſe luſt? Put ſuch queſtions as theſe to thy Soul, and anſwer them impartially and truly. And if thou liveſt in any of theſe, or the like wilful ſins, be aſſured thou haſt been falſe to the Covenant which thou was entred into in Baptiſm: But if thy Conſcience can truly witneſs for thee, that thou *hateſt every falſe way, haſt a reſpect to all God's Commandments*, earneſtly deſiring, and diligently endeavouring in all thy ways to approve thy ſelf to the moſt righteous God, longing after nothing more than thou maiſt walk unblameably before him, then thou maiſt ſafely conclude that thou art one of God's Covenant-people, and as ſuch he will own thee, and to thee belong the priviledges and benefits of the Covenant, and therefore the Seals of it too; ſo that thou haſt very good warrant to addreſs thy ſelf to this Sacrament, whereby all the promiſes of God are confirm'd to his people, and whereby they profeſs the hearty rendring up of themſelves to him.

By this time I hope thou ſeeſt what it is to be cordially in Covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, which all are engaged to by Baptiſm, and which Covenant they renew at the Lord's Supper, namely, to love God above all, and to account his love thy chiefeſt happineſs, to accept of Jeſus Chriſt as thy only Saviour to bring thee to this happineſs, and to be willing to be ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, and led by him in the ways of holineſs. Now, if thou findeſt thy ſelf ſtrange to all this, and didſt never yet feel thy Soul brought under the bond of this Covenant, my next work is to perſwade thee to it, even to beſeech thee deliberately and ſeriouſly, but yet ſpeedily, to make a firm and everlaſting Covenant with God to be his upon his own terms, to be abſolutely devoted to him in heart and life, as thou waſt in Baptiſm. Something I ſhall ſay to prevail with thee, if poſſible, for the performance of this weighty indiſpenſible Duty. But by the way take notice, that all I am exhorting thee to may well be included in this one word, even *Believing in Jeſus Chriſt*, which is that qualification I am now upon, diſcovering the neceſſity of it in all Communicants. And this I would have thee to obſerve, that thou maiſt the better underſtand what I mean when I preſs thee to *faith in Chriſt*, as making it all one with the Covenant now mentioned:

oned: For, as I have before intimated, he that truly believes in Christ, receives him in the quality and office of a Mediator, by him he to attain to that happineſs which he offers to Men; and conſents to be brought to it in that way which he thinks fit to direct. Now the happineſs he offers, is the enjoyment of God in Glory, and this he hath procured for Believers by his ſatisfaction and interceſſion, and fits them for it by his Spirit, which cures all their diſtempers, and raiſeth them to a perfect love of God, and likeneſs to him; and ſo makes them capable of full Communion with him, which is their bleſſedneſs. So that to receive Chriſt as he offers himſelf to us (which is our Faith in him) not only ſignifies our dependance on his merits for the pardon of ſin, but alſo includes in it our love to God above all, to whom we hope to be reconciled and brought nigh by Chriſt, and contains in it our reſolution to ſubmit to the working and guidance of the Holy Ghoſt, who purifies the heart, and enables us to follow after holineſs, till we are brought to the ſight and fruition of God. I ſhall attempt to make it as plain as may be, by an eaſie compariſon. Suppoſe a King had baniſh'd a great Company of Subjects for rebelling againſt him, into a foreign Country, where they ſtay ſo long, that they have even forgot the manners and language of their own Nation, and are become wild and barbarous, like the people they convers'd with, and after ſome time, this King, taking pity on his baniſh'd Subjects, ſhould agree with his only Son, that if he would venture upon the hazards and troubles of ſo long a journey, he ſhould take a chief Officer along with him, and go to theſe Rebels, with Proclamation of pardon to all ſuch who ſhould acknowledge their crime, and were willing to return into their own Land, there to live in the obedience and favour of their Soveraign; and in order hereto, would come to this Officer to be taught by him the Language of their Country, and how to behave themſelves, ſo as they might pleaſe their King, and be fit to be in his Preſence: When now the King's Son ſhould come to theſe men, and ſhew them his Commiſſion, and perſwade them to be ruled by him, who is come ſo tedious and dangerous a journey to free them from the miſeries of baniſhment, propoſing the terms on which he will deliver them, all thoſe that believe he ſpeaks true, and hath power to help them, and being willing to be delivered upon his conditions, do put their truſt in him, by his means to be reſtored to

the favour of their Prince, and their former habitations, they do this very action manifeſt their love to their native Country, and their willingneſs to live in obedience to their King whom they had diſpleaſed; and do hereby alſo engage to accept of this Officer that accompanies the Prince to teach them the Language and Manners of the Country they are about to return to. The application of this to the matter in hand, is very eaſie: for in the ſame manner doth Faith in Chriſt, and our acceptance of him, imply our love to God, and deſire to live for ever in his favour, which is that Chriſt offers us, and by his death hath purchaſed for true Believers; and it implies alſo our willingneſs to be ſanctified by his Spirit, that we may be made meet to live for ever in the love of God.

Oh hearken then, and give ear, all you loſt Sinners, (ſomewhat to purſue the former compariſon) all you that are the poſterity of ſinful *Adam*, who by his tranſgreſſion baniſh'd himſelf out of Paradiſe; you that are wandring up and down in this Wilderneſs, and have even forgot the heavenly Country, as if you were made only to be inhabitants of this lower World, here to live with the Beaſts a miſerable life for a while, and hereafter to dye like Beaſts that periſh; and accordingly make it your own work to run, and ride, to labour and toil for ſuch things as are needful for this preſent life, without regarding that which is to come; whilſt you are thus eſtranged from God, forgetful of, and daily running farther and farther from him, behold a Meſſage of glad tydings and great joy is diſpatch'd to you from Heaven. The great God that made you, takes pity on you, and is even grieved to ſee what a miſery you have plunged your ſelves into, when he made you ſo happy. He is by no means pleaſed, that ſuch noble Creatures, lately raiſed out of nothing for ſuch glorious ends, ſhould through their own folly, and the ſubtilty of the tempter, be debaſed into ſuch a wretched, ſordid ſlavery. Wherefore in purſuance of his gracious deſigns for your recovery, and to ſhew how his Bowels yern over you, he hath ſent his own Son out of his Boſome, who is one with himſelf, to take our nature upon him, and to become one with us, that he might be every way fit to be a Mediator betwixt God and us. That he might teach us by his Doctrin, encourage us by his example, and make attonement for us by death. Accordingly all this is done, the Son of God is come into the World, and

hath

hath abundantly evidenced his Commiſſion from the Father, to treat with loſt mankind about their reconciliation to him; for the procuring of which reconciliation, he laid down his life; and being riſen again, he furniſh'd his Ambaſſadors with authority to aſſure all, that *life was given to the World, and this life was in the Son, ſo that he who hath the Son, hath life*. And this is that meſſage which the Miniſters of the Goſpel at this day, and to the end of the World, are to proclaim to the Sons of men. This, Sirs, is the joyful ſound that is now in your ears: If you will but truſt your Souls with Chriſt, and conſent that his Spirit ſhould teach you the Language of *Canaan*, and work in you an heavenly nature and diſpoſition, ſuitable to the ſtate and place he would bring you to, then ſhall you be happy with God for ever. What ſay you then? Shall Chriſt be your Redeemer, to bring you to glory upon theſe terms or not? What have you to object againſt him? Do you think he doth not mean as he ſpeaks, or that he cannot do what he promiſeth? Dare you queſtion his power, his willingneſs, or his truth? If you will not believe his word, yet give credit to his Death. Does not that tell you he is in good earneſt with you, and fully bent upon the Redemption of Mankind? And beſide the miracles wrought by, and upon him, which fully witneſs for him, let his Reſurrection put you out of doubt, that *him hath God the Father ſealed* to this Office of a Mediator: By this, aſſurance is given to all men, that he is to be Judge of the World, and therefore that all are delivered into his hands, to ſave or condemn, as he ſhall think fit: and he hath plainly declared, that *to thoſe that receive him, he will give power to become the Sons of God*; but as for thoſe who reject him, upon them *the wrath of God abides for ever*. But theſe things I ſhall branch out into two or three particular conſiderations, to perſwade you, if it may be, to accept of Chriſt the Prince of Peace, who comes with the tender of peace to your Souls: to accept of him, I ſay, to waſh you in his Blood, and ſanctifie you by his Spirit, that at length he may preſent you without ſpot or blemiſh into the preſence of his Father.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Perſwaſions to accept of the Redeemer, and give up the Soul in Covenant to him.

1. AND firſt conſider, *I am only perſwading you to be Chriſtians, which you profeſs your ſelves to be.* And will you not indeed be what you profeſs? Why do you embrace the name, if you diſlike the thing? I know you have falſe meaſures, whereby you judge of Chriſtianity, and think perhaps, that all who are baptized, and keep their Church, and call themſelves Chriſtians, are ſo indeed: but you ſhould rather ſay, ſuch do profeſs themſelves ſo to be, but they are not ſo in Gods account, except they are true to this profeſſion. He that wears a Noble-man's Livery, ſeems to be his Servant; but if he will not acknowledge him to be his Maſter, by doing what he commands him, you will ſcarce ſay ſuch a one's his Servant; however, not a Servant to be maintained, but caſhier'd and puniſhed: and if you are but ſuch kind of Chriſtians, you will acknowledge it was as good you were open Infidels. Will you think it enough to prove a man your friend, that he calls you ſo, and gives you many good words, and promiſeth you great matters, and in the mean time ſecretly does all he can to hurt and diſpleaſe you? Even thus hath Chriſt decided the caſe, and told us who are his *Friends*, not they that only ſpeak honourably of him, and pretend great eſteem of him; no, but they who *do what he commands them*, John 15. 14. And if you will not do thus, and yet will needs pleaſe your ſelves with a conceit that you are Chriſtians, notwithſtanding; you may eaſily be convinc'd, that if your Chriſtianity will not bring you to be liſted with the friends of Chriſt, but leaves you amongſt his Enemies, its like to do you very little ſervice. Wherefore he is only the true Chriſtian who takes Chriſt in all thoſe relations in which he is repreſented in the Goſpel, and is willing to perform the duties that theſe relations bind him to. And to ſuch a receiving of Chriſt I am urging you. Can you be Chriſtians without taking Chriſt for your Lord? And can you do this without you are willing to be governed by him? Is he a Diſciple of Chriſt that will not learn of him, and that will not believe what he ſpeaks

to

to be truth? To give an instance or two, Christ bids you *learn of him to be meek and lowly*, and if you will not do thus, are you indeed any of his Disciples? He tells you, *his Yoke is easie, and his Burthen light*, and therefore requires you to take them on you; if now you think them hard and heavy, and therefore reject them, do you not in effect give him the lye? He tells you he is *the author of eternal Salvation to those that obey him*; and if you refuse obedience to him, and yet pretend you hope to be saved by him, can you count this believing in him? When he would redeem you from your iniquities, and you will not part with them, do you take him for your Redeemer? So that its evident you are not really, and in Gods account, Christians, except you are willing to be guided by Christ to happiness in the way which he hath revealed; wherefore you must see to come up to this, or be reckoned as Heathens and Infidels, and accordingly dealt with; and chuse you whether, if indeed you find any difficulty in the choice.

2. Consider seriously *what a kind of design it is that Christ comes to you upon*, and see whether it be not most reasonable you should comply with him? He offers himself to be your Saviour, and what can you say why you should not close with this offer? Examine what hurt there is in that work of Christ upon your Souls, against which you are most prejudiced. He would take off your affections from earthly things that cannot satisfie them, and set them on things above, which will prove a durable portion. He would cure the blindness bruitishness and deadness of your Souls, and raise you to the greatest liberty and freedom of mind, and to the most reasonable excellent life, whereof you are capable. He would bring you out of darkness into light, from pain and grief to the most manly joys; he would deliver you out of the noise and tumult of your lusts and passions, and settle you in a sweet and steady *peace*. Instead of being unserviceable to God and Man, and destroyers of your selves, he would make you fruitful and useful in your generation, and your own truest friends. I speak of the present effects of his operation upon your Souls, which would receive an unspeakable advancement, by being freed from the dominion of Sin and *Satan*, wherein Christ finds you. For certainly to be thus enslaved is the greatest misery that can at present befal you, as it debases and defiles you, and puts you out of that order in the Creation which God placed you in. Nothing in all the world can be so much disgrace

to

to you as this; for of reasonable Creatures, you are hereby become like Bruits, yea, in some sense worse; and instead of the Image of God, you bear the Image of the Devil, through your love of sin and enmity to holiness. And do you think there is no hurt in all this? No, not in becoming Idiots and Fools, living contrary to, and below your reason? not being like the Devil, whom you cry out upon, and pretend to abhor? Is it no dishonour to you to have him to be your Father whilst you do his works? Well then, I hope you have nothing to say against Christ, who comes to recover you to your selves, to bring you into your right wits, to shew you your former folly, and make you ashamed of, and humbled for it, that you may forsake it; whose design is to raise you to the priviledge and dignity of your natures, by repairing God's image upon you which you had lost, bringing you to love that which is best for you, to beware of what would hurt you, and be weaned from those things that will leave you, and cannot make you happy. And if you have nothing to object against all this, much less can you speak against his intention to keep you from misery, and make you blessed for ever, if you will hearken to him, of which I shall speak by its self. Where then does the matter stick? What can hinder you from coming to Christ, who only only calls you to him to take off your load, and lighten your burden, and to give you ease & rest?

3. Consider *what Christ hath undergone in order to the making of your peace with God, on condition of your acceptance of him.* He became poor to make you rich; He became the Son of Man that you might be the Sons of God; he came down from Heaven to raise you thither; he entred into combate with the Devil that you might be enabled to conquer him. He bore the worst the world could do, and overcame all its assaults, that you by him might overcome the World. He drank the bitter Cup, the Dregs whereof you had otherwise been drinking eternally. When the Sword of Justice was ready to sheath it self in your bowels, he came betwixt, and received it into his own. He willingly gave up himself to the death, that bitter, cruel, shameful death, that your Souls might live for ever. He bore your sins, that they might not lie on you as an heavy load, to sink you into the lowest Hell. He was made a curse, that you might escape it, and obtain a blessing. And after all this that he hath done and suffered, shall he be rejected? Hath he done thus much in order to your deliverance, and shall all be lost as to you, as if it had never been done?

What!

What! Hath the Son of God, *manifeſt in the fleſh*, ſhed his warmeſt hearts-blood to be as a Balſom for your wounded ſouls, and are you not willing it ſhould be applied? Methinks common ingenuity ſhould tell you that matchleſs love as this ſhould not be ſo ſlighted. If you were taken Captive by the *Turks*, and a near Friend ſhould venture his own life to free you thence, ſure you would be willing to return with him, though you might have great offers to ſtay behind, if it was for nothing elſe but to gratifie your Friend, who had ventured ſo hardly for you, that you might not give him cauſe to repent of his labour. And what! Shall the blood of Chriſt be as it were ſpilt on the Ground, and have no effect on thee? How hard is that Rock whom this will not ſoften? I beſeech thee, *Reader*, to think what Chriſt hath gone through to deliver thy Soul from the Jaws of Death, and then think whether it be juſt and reaſonable that he ſhould return without his errand. I know I have mentioned this before, but I ſhall not ſtick to inculcate it again and again, that it may have ſome force, ſome power upon thy heart. And to that end, before I leave this Head, let me intreat thee to imagine, that thou ſaw'ſt Chriſt Jeſus now before thee all in Blood and Wounds, calling thee to him as he did *Thomas*, bidding him to thruſt thy Hands into his Side, and put thy Fingers into the print of the Nails, and ſuppoſe thou heareſt him ſaying to thee, *Look here ſinner, behold theſe tokens of my love, ſee what I have endured on thy behalf: Oh be not faithleſs, but believing; be not perverſe and obſtinate, but willing to come to me, who have felt ſo much pain to procure thy eaſe, if thou doſt not wilfully refuſe it. Caſt away thoſe ſins which have uſed me thus; truſt thy ſelf with me, who have given ſuch coſtly evidences of my deſire to do thee good; accept me for thy Redeemer, who paid ſuch a price for thee; own me for thy Lord, who have thus brought thee out of ſlavery; follow me in the way I ſhall ſhew thee, that I may bring thee ſafe in the preſence of the Father, whom I have reconciled to thee:* Suppoſe, I ſay, thou ſhould'ſt ſee Chriſt, even covered over with his own Blood, importuning thee thus to forſake thy ſins, and accept of his grace and mercy, what would'ſt thou ſay? what anſwer would'ſt thou give? could'ſt thou find in thy heart to contemn him, to ſtop thy Ears to his Requeſts, and go away without regarding him? or would'ſt thou tell him he had not done enough to engage thee to him, and that thou ſaw'ſt no reaſon to hearken to his offers, that thy ſins were more ſweet and precious than grace and glory, and any thing

thing he would give could possibly be? Surely thou dost not. And if not, then let not thy heart and practice return the same answer to me, who, in the *name and stead of Christ, beseech thee, that thou wilt through him be reconciled to God.* Even by all those wounds which Christ suffered upon the Cross, by all those pangs and dolours which he felt in his Soul, by his cries and groans, by his tears and blood, I do, as upon my knees, beseech thee to give an hearty entertainment to the Lord Jesus; who was thus bruised and wounded for thy sake. Oh let him in thee *see the travel of his Soul, and be satisfied.* No longer cherish those lusts which resist his entrance; off with those Bars and Bolts that have lockt him out; down with those strong holds that have stood out against him; let the *Gates of thy Heart flye open*, and *let this King of Glory come in* cheerfully, thankfully receive him, and absolutely render up thy self to him, to be disposed of as he shall think fit, only begging that thou maist be taken into the number of his Redeemed ones, and be enabled to perform the duties enioyned them, and be fitted to enjoy the priviledges assured to them. This is that faith in Christ which I would so fain perswade and beg thee to, and that by the consideration of what thy Saviour hath endured upon this account, that through faith in him thou mightest be pardoned and saved.

4. Consider, as what bitter things Christ underwent to purchase Salvation for thee, if thou reject him not, so, *what a most reasonable condition he hath appointed thee to perform*, that thou mightest obtain Salvation by him; even thy unfeigned willingness to accept him for thy Redeemer, and thankfully to receive the benefits which he hath purchas'd for thee.

And will not this induce thee to enter into Covenant with him, when the terms thereof are so fair and gracious? This thy hearty consent, that Christ shall perform the whole work of a Saviour to thee, and for thee, is the chief thing required to make thee one of his Members. This is the great Command of the Gospel, to believe in Jesus Christ. So that thou hast nothing to say on thy own behalf, if thou should'st be found at last to have neglected this duty: For tell me, could'st thou have desired any thing more favourable? If thou hadst been enjoyned some great thing, would'st thou not have done it? Much more now thou art only required to be willing to have Christ, and life with him, and all shall be thine, wilt thou not be brought to this? But still remember the Offices of Christ must not be divided, nor his

nor his benefits ſeparated: He muſt be taken for thy Lord to rule in thy heart, and govern thy life, as well as for thy Saviour to keep thee from miſery; and thou muſt be as willing to feel in thy Soul the power of his Croſs, crucifying thy luſts, as to have the merit of his Croſs procure thy pardon; now thou muſt be brought to the love of Heaven above Earth, if thou would'ſt be received thither by Chriſt when thou leaveſt the Earth. But yet in all this, it is but the conſent of thy Soul which is principally required, in order to the attainment of the offered mercies. And wouldſt thou have matters brought down lower yet? Wouldſt thou be ſaved againſt thy Will, and hal'd to Heaven when thy heart is againſt it? Or wouldſt thou have ſuch kind of exceptions as theſe put in with the conditions of thy Salvation? *That thou maiſt have liberty to trample on Chriſts Blood, and yet be waſh'd in it from the guilt of ſin; that thou mayſt have leave to ſerve the Devil, and yet receive from Chriſt the wages he gives his faithful Servants; that thou mayſt be allowed to love creatures more than God, and yet that God ſhould love thee with his deareſt love; that thou mayſt live without grace, and yet when thou dieſt be received into glory.* Wouldſt thou indeed make ſuch terms as theſe, if it was left to thy own choice? Thou couldſt not ſure be ſo fooliſh, ſo baſely diſingenuous. If not, then come in and ſubmit to theſe conditions that are now offered thee, than which thou canſt not, if thou beeſt well in thy wits, wiſh for any that ſhould be more ſuited to thy eaſe and intereſt. Hearken then to the free and affectionate invitations of Chriſt himſelf, *To every one that thirſteth, let him come to me and drink; and whoſoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely*, Iſa. 55. 1 John 7. 37. Rev. 22. 17. Give not Chriſt cauſe to complain over thee, that *thou wouldſt not come to him that thou mighteſt have life*; that *he would have gathered thee as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, but thou wouldeſt not*? Oh what a cutting thought will this be in Hell, to remember at what cheap rates thou mighteſt have eſcaped that miſery, but would'ſt not! How eaſily, how certainly thou mighteſt have been happy for ever, but thou *wouldeſt not*! The way was ſhewn thee, and thou waſt exhorted, and beſought again and again to walk in that way, but *wouldeſt not* hearken. Chriſt would have been thy Saviour as well as others, but thou *wouldſt have none of him*, being in the number of thoſe rebellious ones, who *would not that he ſhould reign over them*. And how utterly inexcuſable wilt thou be at the day of accompts, when it

ſhall

ſhall be asked thee, what reaſon thou hadſt for thy not cloſing with Chriſt, when he offered to have ſav'd thee? What anſwer canſt thou then make, except this may go for an anſwer, then thou waſt fully reſolved againſt it? What though thou hadſt not wit or learning to improve for Chriſt, nor an eſtate to lay out for him, yet hadſt thou not a will to embrace him and his tenders? Could'ſt thou not have loved him, and have given up thy ſelf to him? Could Men or Devils, or any thing but thy own wretched obſtinacy and perverſeneſs have hindred this? Thou who art now reading this, who haſt heard the Goſpel again and again, canſt not pretend ignorance; for thou haſt been many times informed, and once more let me aſſure thee, that if thou art willing, Chriſt is willing; yea, he is earneſtly deſirous of thy happineſs, and had rather thou wouldeſt turn and live, than go on and die; yea, he hath ſet himſelf full in the way to prevent thy damnation, ſo that thou canſt not go to Hell, but thou muſt tread him under thy feet, who ſtands betwixt to keep thee thence: If now at this very moment thou wilt comply with the deſign of Chriſt, to ſave thee in the way he hath eſtabliſhed, he will ſurely perform all his promiſes to thee. But beware of deceiving thy ſelf, pretending thou art willing to have Chriſt, and that thy heart is wholly ſet on him, whilſt yet in thy actions and converſations thou art not ſubject to him; for the tenour of thy life will be ſure to follow the bent of thy heart: If the temptations of *Satan* do ordinarily prevail with thee againſt the Commands of Chriſt, doth not he poſſeſs thy heart, who can thus put thee upon action? If thou followeſt thy pleaſures or worldly buſineſs to the neglect of God's ſervice, is it not plain that thou loveſt the world and the fleſh more than God and holineſs? Canſt thou be diligent to pleaſe thoſe whom thou hateſt, and to injure and provoke ſuch as thou loveſt beſt? Theſe are too groſs pretences to paſs for current, and thy own conſcience cannot be convinc'd of their vanity and falſhood. If thou conſenteſt that Chriſt alone ſhall be thy Saviour, thou wilt depend upon him only for thy Salvation; if thou art willing he ſhould govern thee, thou wilt in the courſe of thy life yield obedience to him: If thou ſayeſt thou haſt not power to be willing, prithee examine what this means, but that thou art abſolutely unwilling, and then whoſe fault is that? Who is it, I would fain know, hinders thee from being willing? or whom doſt

thou

thou think to lay the blame on? Be assured the Holy God will clear himself if thou should'st lay the cause of thy damnation on him, as if he did not give thee grace enough to change thy heart; since thou didst not improve that measure of Grace which was given thee, and didst by thy wilfulness keep out what was farther offered to thee: And thou wilt have small comfort in laying the fault on the Devil or thy wicked Companions, thy accusations of them will be far from acquitting thy self. They shall dearly answer for what they have done, but yet thou wilt still be left liable to justice; yea, thou wilt be found to belye the Devil himself, if thou say'st he was the chief cause of thy ruine; for he could never have deceived and undone thee, if thou hadst not been willing to hearken to him, and be deluded by him. Nor could thy Companions have drawn thee to sin, if thou hadst not first been in love with it; for neither they, nor the tempter, whose instruments they were, could thus prevail with them whose hearts were against it. Neither will it excuse thy rejection of Christ, to say thou never hadst sufficient reason given to draw thee to him, and that thou never heardest of any such advantage to be had by him as might allure thee; for thou shalt then be made to acknowledge, that in the thing it self there was reason, abundant reason, for thy acceptance of him. But if it did not prove sufficient to work upon thee, Why was this? Was the Gospel unreasonable, or wast not thou unreasonable in slighting it? Was it hid from thee? If so, was it not because thou didst permit the *God of this world to blind thy mind*, and keep thee from the knowledge of the truth? If thou art still in the dark, is it not because thou *lovest darkness more than light?* Art thou not so fully bent upon the satisfaction of thy Lusts, that thou wilt hear of nothing that should draw thee from them? Art thou not slothful and negligent, and wilt not mind things, nor consider seriously of thy sin or danger, of the love of Christ and thy need of him, and the like subjects; the meditation whereof, through the blessing of God, might have softened thy heart, and bowed thy will to a thorough complyance with the Lord Jesus. And dost thou indeed think that thy wilful affected ignorance shall be held as a sufficient plea for the neglect of thy duty? If, when thou sett'st thy servant to work in thy Shop, he should shut up the

Door and Windows to keep out the Sun, or by night should purposely put out his Candle, and then pretend he could not see to do his work; wouldst thou take this for a good excuse? And dost not thou do thus, who wilt not hearken to, nor consider of the word without thee, and puttest out the light of thy Conscience, that *Candle of the Lord* within thee, whereby thou mightest be led to Christ, and then criest thou canst not find the way to him? If a Prince should send a Proclamation to Rebels, promising pardon to those that would come in, but threatning destruction to such as should persist; if they stop their Ears when it is read to them, and will not enquire after the Contents of it, will it excuse them afterwards to say, they never heard any Invitations to lay down their Arms? Nor, farther canst thou truly say, that Christ required harder things of thee, than this willingness of heart to be saved by him; for wast thou once brought to this, whatever else he requires from thee would appear easie. So far as thy will is made conformable to his, there will appear no more difficulty in obeying his commands, than an hungry man finds in eating, or than a dutiful Child finds in pleasing a loving Father. To do his will would then be thy great delight, thou wouldest find a new nature within thee, carried forth with a mighty power and sweetness to all those acts of obedience that flow from a willing Soul. But yet farther for thy conviction. Suppose a Noble-man should offer to a Beggar, that if she would put off her Rags, and wash her self, and put on the Apparel he had provided, and leave her vagrant life to come and dwell with him, and be his loving and faithful Wife, that then he would marry her, and instate her in all his Honour and Riches: Wouldest thou say there was any thing required of this Woman besides her willingness to become his Wife? I hope, to throw away her rags, and leave her wandring Companions, and live like a Person of Honour, does not look like the paying of a Portion, or doing difficult works. And this is the very case; poor and naked the Lord Jesus finds thee, only covered over with rags and filth; these he bids thee to strip off, to wash thee and make thee clean, and put away the evil of thy doings, to renounce thy Lusts, to forsake thy sinful Courses and Companions; to put on the white Robe which he hath provided for thee, to be cloathed with his

per-

perfect Righteousness, that the guilt of thy sins may not appear; and to be adorned with the graces of his Spirit, that thou mayest be lovely in the sight of God, having thus *put on Christ*; and he offers to espouse thee to himself, and become thy Husband and Head, and make thee a Joynture of Heaven it self, if thou wilt continue in love and faithfulness to him all thy days. Where then is the Dowry that must be given him? No, he asks for none, 'tis thy self he desires, and bids thee come boldly without money or price. What easier terms, what fairer offers would'st thou desire? Shall I then prevail with thee or not? Even as *Abraham* sent his Servant to seek a Wife for his Son *Isaac*, so do I now address my self to thee from my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, earnestly desiring *to espouse thee to him as a chaste Virgin*. With Commission from him I make these tenders to thee: Behold this hour a message of infinite concernment and greatest favour is sent to thee. Christ Jesus the King of Glory offers himself, with all he is and hath, to thee, and by me his Servant thy consent is now demanded. What answer dost thou give me? Wilt thou be married to him or not? Wilt thou not give me that comfortable answer that *Rebeckah* did to *Abraham*'s Servant, *Gen.* 24. 58. *I will go with the man.* Shall I make up the match this day betwixt Christ and thy Soul? If thou sayest No, God that stands over thee will witness, thy own Conscience will witness, yea, these very lines shall witness against thee, that Christ did freely offer himself and salvation to thee, and thou didst perversly reject him. But God forbid, thou should'st do thus foolishly; in the Bowels of Christ let me beseech thee not to turn the deaf Ear to this message. Do not read these things slightly, as if they concerned thee not; but rather stay a while, and let thy thoughts dwell upon the matter. If there be not all the reason in the world for what I urge thee to, slight it and spare not; but examine things well and see thou contradict not thy own reason, nor undo thy self by inconsiderateness. Once again then I ask thee, art thou willing to betroth thy self to Christ, forsaking other Lovers that have sued for thy heart? Wilt thou promise to cleave to him at all times, and in all conditions, and through the assistance of Grace, to be faithful and constant in thy love and obedience to thy lives end? If thou say, Yea, and

art sincere in this resolution, then doubt not but it will be accepted and ratified in Heaven. What thou hast done this hour will be recorded by God himself, and remembred for ever. And do thou make haste to thy private Chamber, there more expresly and solemnly to profess this thy engagement to Christ, and come to the Lord's Table there to seal and confirm this Marriage-Covenant; and let it be thy care all thy days to continue stedfast therein, and then doubt not but Christ will perform his part to a title.

5 That I may be yet the more likely to bring thee to this saving Faith in Christ, which is nothing else but thy consent to be married to him, to receive him for thy Lord and Saviour, as I have before explained it, let me intreat thee to consider *the advantages thou shalt hereby receive from him.* If thou ask me what these are, I may answer, they are so great that I cannot tell thee; they are such as thou must not, thou canst not fully know till thou art possest of them. He that was perfectly acquainted with them all, might be to all eternity in revealing them; for so long shall the true Christian be in enjoying them. But yet lest thou shouldst think these were but only words to draw thee on and deceive thee, know, that I am able out of the Book of God to tell thee so much of thy gains by Christ, in a line or two, as will certainly bring thee to him, if thou wilt be rul'd by the truest reason, and perswaded to chuse what is best for thee. In one word then be assured thou shalt have all that may make thee truly happy in this world and the next for ever, *Psal.* 84. 11. 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Rom.* 8. 28. And what can thy heart wish for more? That very day wherein thy Soul is throughly brought over to Christ, thou hast right by vertue of his rich promise, to all that is in Heaven and Earth that may be for thy good, and accordingly shalt enjoy it, as thou com'st to need it, and art made meet to receive it. So soon as by faith thou art united to Christ, the guilt of all former sins is done away; and for the future thy services shall be accepted, and thine imperfections forgiven; for God is become thy reconciled Father, and will love, own, and bless thee as his Child. And canst thou want any thing who hast God to be thy Father, who owneth all things? Yea, who hast him to be thy portion, who is better than all things? All his Attributes, his Wisdom, Power,

power, Truth and Goodneſs will be engaged on thy behalf and employ'd for thee, his works, his word, and all providences ſhall help forward thy happineſs. All thy outward affairs, thy heavenly Father, who knows what thou haſt need of, will ſee and regard; at all times he will ſo diſpoſe of and provide for thee, as ſhall be moſt for thy advantage; no affliction ſhall befall thee, but will prove as Phyſick for thy Soul; in all eſtates and conditions he will be near to thee to direct and preſerve thee, if thou retain thy integrity, ſo that neither Men nor Devils ſhall prevail againſt thee to thy ruine. And the Holy Ghoſt will be thine to enlighten, ſanctifie, guide, and comfort thee, to aſſiſt thee in duties, and to ſeal thee up to everlaſting happineſs. When thou dieſt the Lord Jeſus will receive thy Spirit, and preſerve thee from the roaring Lion, and the Pit of deſtruction: and vouchſafe thee the beginning of happineſs with himſelf, which ſhall be compleated and perfected at the great Reſurrection day, when thou ſhalt be raiſed up by his power, and brought into appearance not in wrath, but in mercy, and ſhalt be publickly owned by that Chriſt, whoſe perſon and cauſe thou didſt here embrace and own; and by him thou ſhalt be openly juſtified from all accuſations of Satan or the Law; and ſhalt be preſented pure and holy into the preſence of the Father, and ſhalt be eternally bleſſed in the enjoyment of all thoſe treaſures of infinite love and goodneſs, which God hath laid up in ſtore for Believers. This is the Inheritance which we come to by Chriſt: we are made *Heirs of God, yea, Co-heirs with his own Son; we enter upon the joy of our Lord, with him we ſhall abide in the manſions that are in our Fathers Houſe.* Then at length we ſhall know all the deſigns of Divine Wiſdom and Love, when they, ſhall be accompliſh'd in us and for us; and by the fruition we ſhall underſtand, what is that *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, for which there were made ſuch wonderful contrivances, ſuch ſolemn preparations, by that God who doth all things like himſelf, being infinitely wiſe and good. Then ſhall we reach to, and find thoſe *glorious things that are ſpoken of the City of God*, yea, thoſe things which it was neither lawful nor poſſible for Angels or men to utter. To be ſhort, thou ſhalt then be advanced to the utmoſt poſſible perfection of thy nature; thy Soul

ſhall be fitted for thoſe actions and employments which are moſt ſuitable to it, even the loving and praiſing thy Maker, Saviour, and Sanctifier; and ſhalt be made capable of taſteing the moſt raviſhing, ſatisfying ſweetneſs and joy in theſe employments, in pleaſing the bleſſing God, and in feeling thy ſelf encompaſſed with the warm embraces of his dearest love. And as this thy bleſſedneſs ſhall be infinite and unſpeakable, ſo ſhall the continuance of it be eternal. Nor ſhall thy delight be once abated or interrupted through all this eternity, but be ever exalted to the higheſt pitch; it ſhall always flow, yea overflow, but never ebb. This is the joy that hath no end, no meaſures or decay. This is the glory which Chriſt will give his Servants: *not as the world gives, gives he unto them. This*, he tells us, *is the will of him that ſent him, that every one that ſees the Son, and believes on him may have everlaſting life*; Joh. 6. 4. *The water which he gives us to drink ſhall be*, in thoſe who partake of it, *a well of Water ſpringing up into everlaſting life.* And ſome beginnings of this divine life now, there are brought into the Soul, whilſt it is made in its meaſure conformable to God, and is carried out after him with the ſtrong workings of love and deſire, and feels the ſhedding abroad of his love in it ſelf, and lives in the joyful expectations of an advancement to the abundance of Life, the perfection of bliſs which I before mentioned. And now Reader, if thou believeſt all this, which I think thou muſt needs, except thou take the Goſpel to be a cheat; if then thou believeſt it to be true, I would know of thee, whether the invitations Chriſt makes thee to come to him, be not backt with ſufficient motives to prevail with all that are not quite beſide their wits in matters of the greateſt moment.

By this time I hope thou ſeeſt that thy Redeemer ſeeks *thy* intereſt, whilſt he is ſo importunate with thee. What is all for in the reſult but this: That thou would'ſt make thy ſelf bleſſed for ever. This he commands thee, this he beſeeches thee to do.* And ſhall ſuch commands be diſobey'd? Shall ſuch requeſts be denied? Good Lord! How ſtrange a thing is this? That Man a reaſonable Being, whoſe wiſdom ſets him above all other creatures on Earth, ſhould be thus wood, thus call'd upon and intreated to be happy, and yet that he ſhould ſtand dallying and deliberating whether

ther he had beſt be ſo or not; yea, that he ſhould peremptorily refuſe to be ſo. Which ſhould I moſt admire in this caſe, the diſtraction and baſe ingratitude of man; or the inconceivable mercy and patience of God, ſo long to bear with ſuch unworthy Creatures, and ſo frequently to renew the offers of bleſſedneſs; and even preſs it upon them? Well then, do'ſt thou think there is any gain in godlineſs? Is there enough to be had with Chriſt to make him and his gifts worth the accepting? For that I tell thee ſtill is all that is expected from thee: be but cordially willing to take him, and all his benefits together, and for certain all ſhall be thine. Thou ſhalt find every promiſe of the book of God made good to thy comfort; yea, thou ſhalt find ten thouſand times more than ever thou could'ſt underſtand or conceive from the fulleſt promiſes, the higheſt expreſſions that ever thou met'ſt with concerning the priviledges of Believers. Shall all that is ſaid then bring thee to be one of that number or not? Do'ſt thou know where to make a better bargain for thy ſelf? If ſo, take thy own courſe, and make thy beſt on't; for be aſſured, Jeſus Chriſt needs not thee. His glory doth not ſo depend on thy ſubjection to him, that it ſhould be leſſened in caſe of thy diſobedience. Do thou as thou wilt; he knows how to ſecure his own intereſt; but fain he would perſwade thee to take pity on thy ſelf, and ſave thy own Soul. If there be any in all the World that hath done more for thee than Chriſt, or that will do more, hearken to him and ſpare not. But before thou conclude there is any ſuch perſon or thing, examine matters well on both ſides; and then do as thou ſeeſt meet. Indeed the caſe is ſo plain, that the verieſt child or fool almoſt may know how to decide it. Bethink thee well what thou art like to have from the World, from thy Luſts, from the ſervice of the Devil, or from any thing that would keep thee from Chriſt. Canſt thou think that the ſatisfying of thy ſenſes with what they call for, or pleaſing thy fancy with things ſuperfluous, or living in idleneſs and wantonneſs, in pride and pomp with the applauſe of the World, is any or all of this better than the love of God, better than the *fulneſs of joy* to be had in his *preſence*, or better than the *rivers of pleaſure at his right hand for evermore*? But be they as good as they will, doſt

thou think they will always last? Or hath the Devil any future reward for his Servants, when their miserable slavery in this life is ended? Amongst all his Temptations, did he ever so much as once bear thee in hand, that he would make thee happy for ever? Is it possible for thee to be ignorant, that the *pleasures of sin*, besides their emptiness and baseness, are but *for a season*? So that if thou remain without Christ, thou hast no whither to go, nothing to trust to, that will not miserably fail thy expectations. Look round about thee, and see if thou canst find any other foundation to build upon, to raise an happiness to thy self. And when thou hast but considered a while, with that seriousness that beseems one who hath a desire to do himself good, I doubt not but the language of thy soul will be like that of *Peter* to Christ, *Joh 6. 68. Lord, whither shall I go? Thou only hast thy words of eternal life. Thou only hath revealed it, thou alone directest to it, thou only hast purchast it, thou only hast promised it, and thou alone canst bestow it upon thy people: wherefore to thee, Lord, I betake my self, renouncing all things that stand in competition with thee, be thou my Lord, let me be thy servant; let me live to thee here, and let me live with thee for ever hereafter, partaking of that glory which thou hast obtained of the Father for thy faithful ones.* What saist thou? Does thy very heart agree to these words or not? Say yea, or, no, before thou goest any farther. I am sure thou hast nothing like reason to give, why it should not. Oh give not Christ cause to wonder at thy obstinacy and unbelief, who when he came to bring thy Salvation, was rejected. Once again, I assure thee, he comes not to undo thee. Think not thou shalt lose by him, because he calls thee to *Mortification*, Self-denial, and bearing the Cross. If he would take thee from any thing which is dear to thee, 'tis only because it is hurtful; and he'll give thee better Delights, more noble Employments than those he calls thee off from. Thou shalt part with nothing by his service which thou could'st have kept long, and instead of it thou shalt receive a treasure that shall never be taken from thee. But if thou art so fast bound to thy Profits, thy Pleasures, and thy sweet Sins, to which thou hast been long accustomed, that thou will not be perswaded to take thy love off them, and set it on Christ, but art so swallowed

lowed up with them, that thou turneſt the deaf ear to all theſe Intreaties; if this be thy reſolution, that *Baal* ſhall be thy God, and him thou wilt worſhip, that the World ſhall be thy portion, and to it thou wilt cleave, that ſin ſhall be thy Trade, and in it thou wilt live; Remember then thou hadſt thy choice; Chriſt tendered himſelf, and all his ſaving Mercies to thee, but thou didſt deliberately preſer other things before him, and therefore thou haſt no wrong done thee if thou goeſt without him. If this be thy thanks to him for his matchleſs condeſcenſion in inviting thee to glory, grudge not if hereafter he exclude thee from it. And now get thee to thy Idols, which have ſo taken up thy heart, that there was no room for Chriſt, except he would have the leavings of the World and Fleſh, which, be it known to thee, he never will, he'll have the higheſt place or none, and ſince he muſt not have that, go thy way I ſay, and make the beſt of thy Idols, thy Riches, thy Bravery, thy Carnal Joys, and empty Honours, thy dear Friends and pleaſant Companions; ſuck all the ſweetneſs they will yield, and keep them as long as thou canſt; and when thou ſeeſt where they leave thee, and what thou haſt brought thy ſelf to, then let thy Conſcience reflect, whether once thou hadſt not an offer worth the acceptance.

6. But this brings me to the ſixth and laſt Argument to prevail with thee to give up thy ſelf to Chriſt, and that is, *the ſad and doleful effects that are like to follow upon thy rejection of him.* If God do juſt and true, thou art not like to go ſmoothly away with the guilt of this hainous ſin. Something to this purpoſe I mentioned before, and therefore ſhall be the briefer now, only in faithfulneſs and love to thy immortal ſoul, that thou mayeſt never be able to ſay but that thou hadſt fair warning given thee, I now come to tell thee, that if thou ſtandeſt out againſt the mercy that's ſo freely held forth to thee, refuſing to receive thy Saviour on thoſe terms, and to thoſe purpoſes for which he demands acceptance, thou art then like to be as miſerable, a forlorn, undone, Creature, both Body and Soul, as ever trod upon the Earth, or ſaw the Sun. Make as light of theſe threatnings as thou wilt, but if there be a God in Heaven, be aſſured they will be made good upon thee, as ſhortly thou

wilt

wilt feel to thy everlasting sorrow, if thy speedy conversion do not prevent it. Think not I take any delight to dig in the bowels of Hell, and throw flashes of fire in thy face, meerly to terrifie and daunt thee, no, but I would fain, if possible, prevent thy misery, by discovering what it's like to be, if thou throw thy self headlong into it. And oh that I could speak any thing that might make some impression upon thee, not only to bring thee to a fright, and there leave thee, but a little to awake thee to a sense what a mischievous thing that sin is, which now thou art so deeply in love with, that thou may'st see to get thy hands rid of it, before it be too late to wish thou hadst done so! Even during this present life, whilst thou art without Christ, thy condition is most sad, however thou may'st applaud and bless thy self in thy worldly enjoyments. For thou art this while under the load of thy Original sin, and all the transgressions which thou hast actually committed in thought, word, or deed, since thou camest into the World, the least of which, without pardoning mercy, would drown thee in perdition. Thou hast no certainty for an hour of any of those things which thou possessest, but art liable to as short warning as the rich *Fool* in the Gospel, who was called away in *that night*, wherein he bid his *Soul take its ease, eat, drink, and be merry*. For thou canst not shew any true title, by virtue of a promise from God, to the least of all thy comforts: But thou standest always exposed to that wrath which thou art *treasuring up for thy self against the day of wrath*. Thou liest wholly at his mercy whom thou art daily provoking to fury. In all thy ways which are so defiled, the holy God beholds thee in anger, and even loaths thee for thy filthiness. And he alone knows how short a while he is determined to wait on thee; thy Glass is running, his patience is expiring, Death and Judgment are hasting, Hell is already burning, and thou canst not promise thy self a moments safety. Whilst thou art sleeping or waking, eating or working, talking and laughing, the heavy doom hangs over thy head, and thou hast every day reason to expect the dreadful vengeance of the Lord to seize upon thee; nothing but meer mercy hath

kept

kept it off this while, which will not always last. At night when thou goest to Bed, its a great hazard but thou may'st awake in flames, and never more see the comfortable light; or when thou goest out of doors, it's a question whether thou may'st not with *Judas*, go to thy own place, the infernal Manſions, before thou returnest home. For ought I know, or thou either, this may be the laſt Book that ever thou may'ſt read, this may be the laſt warning that ever thou mayst have. Think a little whether this be a comfortable caſe for a man to continue in, and what wiſe people they are that venture all upon a Repentance hereafter. Moreover in all the troubles thou may'ſt meet with in the World, I know not what ſupport, what comfort can be adminiſtred to thee; for there's none to be given thee from God, I am ſure, whilſt thou art a reſolved enemy to him. What ſhift thou makes to get a little eaſe and relief at ſuch a time I cannot but wonder; only the remnants of thy carnal comforts, and the hopes thou haſt of ſeeing things better, it's like may help thee to ſome falſe peace. But alas poor man, *Death* will ſhortly arreſt thee; *Death* that will ſtrip thee of all that thy heart delighted and truſted in; *Death* that will break the neck of all thy fond hopes, and utterly fruſtrate thy expectations; *Death* that will carry thee out of this beloved World into a place to which thou haſt been a meer ſtranger, not thinking of it at all, or but coldly and ſeldom, or with horrour and averſneſs; this *Death*, I ſay, will ſhortly lay hold on thee, and then whither wilt thou look for comfort, who art a ſtranger to God and Jeſus Chriſt? Into whoſe hands wilt thou commend thy departing Soul, who would'ſt not whilſt thou waſt living, reſign thy ſelf to the God who made thee, and bought thee with his Son's blood? Canſt thou expect Chriſt ſhould now receive thee, who wouldſt not be perſwaded to receive him? What? receive a Rebel into the Kingdom of peace? A filthy Swine into the communion of Saints? No, never expect it. And if he will not receive thee, who muſt? If heaven may nor hold thee, what place will? Thou canſt eaſily anſwer theſe queſtions. And when by a Reſurrection to condemnation, thou art made with all the reſt, to ſtand

in

in the preſence of thy Judge, how wilt thou then appear before him? For the Lord's ſake, yea, for thy own ſake, poor ſinner, thou that canſt not be brought to like Chriſt, nor his holy Laws and ways, nor the ſanctifying work of his holy Spirit, put theſe queſtions as thou readeſt them, cloſe to thy heart. What wilt thou then ſay to Jeſus Chriſt for this thy contempt, and diſlike of his Perſon and Government? Dareſt thou then juſtifie thy unbelief and impenitence, when he calls thee to anſwer for it? Or who wilt thou get to plead for thee, when the only advocate ſhall condemn thee? Whom wilt thou make thy friend, when he, who alone could, and would have been ſo, is, through thy own fault, become thy greateſt Enemy? Dare Angels or Saints ſpeak a word for him againſt whom their Lord ſhall ſpeak? Or would they if they durſt? No, they will approve his righteous Sentence. Will the Devil take thy part doſt thou think? Hath he any power there to ſecure his fellows? Why it's he that is thy accuſer, and if need be, would rather aggravate thoſe faults which he drew thee to. Wilt thou then hit him in the teeth with the large promiſes he made thee, and call on him to make them good? Alas, he'll but laugh at thee, and ſcorn thee, and make thee acknowledge, that moſt juſtly are all they ſerved, who would truſt to the Devils deluſions, rather than to Gods promiſes. Or doſt thou expect relief from thy Companions in torment? Ah poor Creatures, they would rather help themſelves if they could, but cannot; Oh then! with what an heart, with what a countenance wilt thou hear that laſt dolefal ſentence, *Depart from me ye curſed*! when thou ſhalt look round about and ſee no help, no hope, but that down thou muſt lie in that burning lake, *which the breath of the Lords fury like a ſtream of brimſtone doth kindle*, what a poſture will thy Soul be in; I can tremble to conceive it, eaſier then I can expreſs it. And when thou haſt lain ſome thouſands of years in that place of torments, what then will the workings of thy heart be; when thou haſt felt that *tribulation and anguiſh which comes upon thoſe that work evil*, what thoughts wilt thou have of the ways that brought thee thither? What would'ſt thou not do for the leaſt

dram

dram of hope in that miſerable deſpairing ſtate, for the leaſt glimmering of light in that gloomy darkneſs? But there is none to be had, no nor ever will through a whole Eternity; the force of which word *Eternity*, and the meaning of *Hell*, is now known and felt in another manner, than when careleſs ſinners could laugh at the mention of them, or ſleep whilſt they were preach'd on. But what? canſt thou not perſwade thy ſelf that there are any ſuch torments prepared for unbelievers? If not, it's to be feared thou art one of thoſe unbelievers for whom they are prepared; But if Scripture may convince thee, read amongſt other places, 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 8, 9. *Mat.* 25. 46. *John* 3. 36. and then tell me thy judgment. Now indeed all this is but talk; Hell's out of ſight, and the moſt terrible words are but wind; and therefore it is there is ſo little care in the world to make ſure of his favour, who can ſave them from this miſery, which, becauſe it's neither ſeen nor felt, is ſlighted and forgotten. Should a King take a company of men out of Priſon, who had committed ſome fault worthy of death, and offer pardon to thoſe that would be ſorry for their crime, and promiſe never to be guilty of the like, but threaten death to thoſe that would not; and withal ſhould ſhew them pardons ready ſealed, and great hopes of money to be given to the penitent, but racks and gibbets, and fires ready kindled, for the execution of the obſtinate: Do you think this would not eaſily prevail with them, when they ſaw in good earneſt what was like to betide them? And if Chriſt would take this courſe, and ſhew Heaven and Hell, if that were poſſible, plainly to their Eye-ſight, it's like the moſt ſtubborn ſinners would be awakened, but he will not do thus, nor is there any reaſon he ſhould. Since we are made men to be ruled by reaſon, why ſhould he deal with us like Brutes that muſt be led by their Senſes? yet becauſe he will not take this way with them, brutiſh ſinners diſregard him, as if they needed him not. But ah Sirs! all you that could ſee no need of Chriſt, when he was ſo urged and preſt upon you, when ſhortly you ſhall ſee all the World ſtand before him, and ſhall behold the devouring flames, into which all they muſt be caſt, who

have

have not a part in his love; then you will see what benefit comes by Christ, then you will no longer count them Fools, that took it for their greatest business to get an interest in him. Then, if the most passionate wishes that you had been so wise, would do you any good, if the loudest roarings, and bitterest cries for mercy might prevail, you would think them all well spent; but alas, all will be to no purpose. Cry *Lord, Lord*, with never so much noise and earnestness, if thou wast here a *worker of Iniquity*, no other Answer shalt thou obtain, but, *Depart from me, I know thee not.* And thou thy self shall be forced to acknowledge that this Sentence is as just as terrible. For did'st thou not here bid Christ to *depart from thee, thou desired'st not the knowledge of his ways?* and is it not just he should then command thee to *Depart from him*, as one he will not know nor own? Heaven thou did'st refuse, since it was to be had on no other terms then submission to Christ; and therefore thou must needs fall into Hell, since there is no third place provided. But perhaps thou wilt flatter thy self with a conceit that none of these things shall come upon thee, in that, as thou pretendest, thou put'st thy whole trust in God that he'll save thee, and relyest upon thy Saviour Jesus Christ alone, to be kept by him from Hell, and the power of the Devil. But beware. I beseech thee, how thou cheatest thy Soul into that misery, whence no trick or wile can ever fetch thee. Do'st thou put thy trust in God he'll take thee to heaven when thou diest, who now allowest thy self in those very sins for which he hath threatned to turn men into Hell? If indeed thou dost so, then I hope it is some promise of his that thou bottom'st thy trust upon, or else it is a vain confidence; now shew me, if thou canst, one promise in the whole Book of God, that gives thee the least ground to hope for happiness, whilst thou continuest in an unregenerate natural estate, in love with thy sins? take thy Bible, and turn it over from one end to the other, and see if thou canst find any such place, but I could shew thee an hundred Texts, where wrath is threatned to all unconverted Sinners, continuing such. So that in plain English, thy trust in God is no more than a wretched presumption,

that

that he will be ſo merciful as to break his word to ſave thee; and if indeed this word prove falſe, then thy confidence will not deceive thee; but if it prove true, as for certain it will, then woe be to thee, for all this pretended truſt. And of the very ſame ſtamp is thy reliance on Chriſt, whilſt thou rebelleſt againſt him. For tell me, prithee, does the Goſpel ſay, *that every man who ſhall believe that Chriſt will ſave him, ſhall be ſaved by him, let his Heart and Life be what it will.* I am ſure neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles ever made known ſuch a Doctrine: And if thy faith be grounded upon any other Goſpel than Chriſt hath revealed, thou art like to go ſeek another Heaven than that he hath promiſed. For he hath told thee plainly, that *without holineſs* thou ſhalt *never ſee the Lord*; that he is the *author of Salvation*, only to thoſe *that obey him*; and that he takes off *condemnation* from none but ſuch *who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.* Now if thou doſt truly believe in Chriſt, thou wilt ſet thy ſelf to ſeek for happineſs in the way that he hath appointed, not in one of thy own deviſing; for elſe it is a ſign that thou doſt not depend upon him for Salvation; but on thy own fancy, or Satan's deluſions, or whoever it is whoſe directions thou followeſt rather than Chriſts. If thou waſt in a place where two ways meet, and one man ſhould bid thee follow him in this way, and another ſhould bid thee follow him in the contrary way, if thou would'ſt come to thy journeys end; is it not plain that thou believeſt him whom thou followeſt? Or if thou hadſt ſome dangerous diſeaſe, and an able Phyſician ſhould tell thee, that if thou would'ſt depend upon him, by the help of God he would recover thee, and ſhould leave with thee ſuch and ſuch Phyſick to take; if in the mean time thou ſhould'ſt take a conceit, that thou mighteſt be well without following his advice, and ſome one elſe ſhould direct thee to an eaſier and cheaper way, whereupon thou throweſt away his Medicines, do'ſt thou then depend upon this Phyſician for a cure? Thus the Lord Jeſus, the great Phyſician of Souls, aſſures thee, if thou wilt depend on, and truſt thy ſelf with him, or believe in him, he will keep thee from that everlaſting death whereof thou art in danger; and

to

to this purpose he ſends his Word and Spirit to cure thee of thy ignorance and wickedneſs, which is the diſeaſe of thy Soul, he would bring thee to Repentance, and throughly purifie and ſanctifie thy heart: but thou think'ſt this a tedious courſe, and wilt by no means ſubmit to it, come on it what will, but fancieſt thou may'ſt be ſaved without ſo much ado, and that forſooth by reliance on Chriſt. Is not this a very wiſe buſineſs, to rely on the Phyſician for health, and throw away the Phyſick that ſhou'd procure it? I know well enough what thou would'ſt have, Chriſt ſhall keep thee from Hell, but yet by all means he muſt give thee liberty to live in ſin; that is, he muſt let thee *carry fire in thy boſome*, but yet he muſt keep thee from being burnt; he muſt let thee drink poyſon, but yet he muſt keep it from griping thy bowels. But believe it, Chriſt came not into the World for any ſuch ends. This he hath purchas'd, That no ſins, great or ſmall, ſhall Damn that Man that's truly humbled for, and forſakes them, and depends upon him for a pardon, and is made holy in heart and life: But not, that he who lives and delights in ſin ſhou'd eſcape miſery, which is indeed a kind of Impoſſibility. For Man is in bondage, and ſin is his fetters; now the *Son would make us free*, he would ſet the Captive at liberty, but muſt he not then take off his fetters? We are pollured, ſin is our filth, Chriſt is the fountain opened for our cleanſing: And can we be clean if we will not be purged from our filthineſs? We are Slaves to Satan through our luſts, by which he leads us whither he will; Chriſt would deliver us from this ſlavery, but muſt he not then break theſe chains? Sin is the Spawn or Seed, Hell is the fruit and off ſpring, and if the Seed be permitted to grow, muſt there not needs be the fruit? And this ſhews how Man plainly deſtroys himſelf, whilſt he will hug Luſts, which are a Serpent in his Boſome, preſuming, that for all that, they will not ſting him.

Man

Man by his ſins had deſerved everlaſting wrath, Chriſt came to ſave him from ſin, and ſo from wrath; and if men will not believe he came to this purpoſe, or will not improve him in order thereto, muſt they not needs *die in their ſins*, and ſo *abide under that wrath* which was before upon them, and which ſtill follows after ſin; *John* 8. 24. and 3. 36. *Acts* 4. 12. Ignorance of God is one part as well as cauſe, of mans unhappineſs, and if men wilfully cloſe their eyes, that the light which Chriſt brings to the world can have no entrance, muſt they not of neceſſity remain in darkneſs? Exceſſive love to our Bodies, and to the comforts of this life which we ſhall be ſtript of, and want of delight in God, and his holy ſervice, is the great miſery of a ſoul, and doth engage it in thoſe ſtrifes with it's Maker, that caſt them into an hell upon earth, and kindle the unquenchable fire; and if they will not give way to the Spirit of Chriſt, to turn the bent and inclination of their hearts from the World to God, do they not retain their own certain miſery? Thus thou ſeeſt how impoſſible it is, even in the thing it ſelf, for all rejecters of Chriſt to eſcape damnation, ſuppoſing they are but continued in being, and left to themſelves; both which, Scripture aſſures us, will befall the impenitent in the future ſtate. But know moreover, to the breaking of thy heart in time, thy condemnation is like to be much more heavy for thy rejecting of Chriſt, than it would have been, if he had never come into the world, or had never offered mercy to thee. Canſt thou in thy own Conſcience think, that thou who haſt been ſo importuned and begg'd by ſo many arguments, to accept of Chriſt, ſhalt eſcape as eaſily as they that never heard of him, or but very darkly? Shall not he that abuſeth ten Talents be more ſeverely dealt with, than he who hides but one? why elſe does Chriſt denounce ſuch woes againſt *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, threatning them with worſe puniſhments than *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*? Was it not becauſe they enjoy'd more mercies and greater means for Repentance; Do we not read, *Heb.* 12. 25. that they *who refuſe to hear the Son ſpeaking from heaven, ſhall much leſs eſcape than they who refuſed to hear the Prophets of old?* And of a *ſorer puniſhment whereof they are worthy*? Heb. 10. 29. Though I would not have thee neglect the means whilſt there is any hope, yet let me tell thee, it had been better for thee to

have never heard one word of the way to Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, than having heard, to ſlight and diſregard it. Every Sermon thou haſt heard, every Book thou haſt read, and every Exhortation thou haſt had, and neglected, will ſink thee ſo much the lower into Hell. Theſe very Lines which thou art now reading, if they be not improved, will, without repentance, be remembred to thy ſmart another day. Be thou well aſſured, though God be the Father of mercies and a God of bowels, yet he takes account of the mercies he affords his Creatures, and takes notice how they improve them; and if they be abuſed, they ſhall be ſeverely reckoned for. God will not be mocked by rebellious Creatures, nor ſhall his precious gifts be trod under feet, and they that do ſuch things eſcape unpuniſhed. Above all then, how will the love of Chriſt in dying for them make their doom more ſad, if they be not *conſtrained* by this love? What torments can be great enough for the ingratitude and perverſneſs of ſuch? If thou, Reader, be one of them, I dare appeal to thy ſelf, whether thou deſerveſt not, for thy unbelief and impenitency, greater ſufferings than if Chriſt had never died. For ſuppoſe there was a Traitor, who for his Treaſon being condemned to die, the Kings own Son ſhould be content to have his right hand cut off (to ſatisfie the Law, and terrifie the people from the like guilt hereafter) that he might obtain a pardon of his Father for this poor man; and when he had got it, ſhould come and tell him what he had done, aſſuring him, that if he will but take him for his deliverer, relinquiſh all his traiterous deſigns, and become a good Subject, he ſhall not only have a pardon, but be taken into the Court, and there live in the greateſt favour and honour: But ſuppoſe he, when he hath heard all, inſtead of a thankful acceptance of his pardon upon theſe conditions, ſhould kick at the hand that offers it, and turn his back upon him with contempt, asking him, who wiſh'd him to trouble himſelf for him? Nay, worſe than this; ſuppoſe, whilſt the Prince is holding forth his Pardon, he ſhould endeavour with a knife that he had got to ſtab him to the heart, would'ſt thou not think that ſuch a Wretch deſerved the greateſt tortures that could be deviſed? And more for this his latter obſtinacy than for his firſt Treaſon? And if thou be guilty of the very ſame, yea worſe perfidiouſneſs and ingratitude againſt God thy

Maker

Maker, and Jesus Christ thy Redeemer, will not thy own Conscience conclude it most just, that the heaviest judgments should be thy portion? Wast thou not liable to death, to all kind of misery for thy sin? Did not the Son of God humble himself to take on him thy nature? and then to die a most shameful cursed death to purchase thy pardon? and yet when he offers it upon condition of thy acceptance of him for thy Saviour, and becoming a faithful Subject to the Sovereign Majesty, thou art so far from being brought to this, that thou rather takest encouragement from this mercy held forth by Christ in the Gospel, to continue in disobedience to God, than which thou could'st not offer a greater injury to thy Saviour to make him as it were a patron of thy wickedness, doing far worse than they that crucified him, whilst thou indeavourest quite to pervert and take away the end of his death, which was to *redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. And if indeed this be thy case, canst thou say one word in thy own excuse, why all the plagues that are prepared for rebellious sinners should not be poured out upon thee, who thus scorned and abused thy compassionate Saviour?

By this time, I hope, thou art convinced, that there is abundant reason why thou shouldest accept of the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring thee to the salvation he hath prepared for his people, in that way which he himself hath prescribed. That thou mightest not want arguments of all sorts, I have plainly told thee what's like to come of thy obstinate refusal. And now after all I again demand of thee, whether thy heart be brought thus throughly to consent, that Christ shall be thy Saviour and take his own way with thee, to keep thee from misery, and bring thee to true blessedness? Art thou resolved to give up thy self to him, and follow his directions, or not? Shall all that hath been said, do nothing to incline thee thereto? Do'st thou think it better to be commanded to go from Christ hereafter, than to come to him at his command for salvation here? Canst thou bear his heaviest indignation rather than his *easie yoke and light burden?* Is there any thing in becoming Christ's faithful Servant worse than being the Devil's everlasting bondslave? Bethink thy self whilest thou hast leisure, and cease not these thoughts, till thou arriveſt to a true sense of the things that concern thee, and

at length art firmly resolved, without any more baffling or dallying, to bind thy self over to Christ by a firm Covenant, to be wholly his, never to depart from him, but in all things sincerely to comply with him, and be guided by him, that thou mayst escape the vengeance thy sins have exposed thee to, and obtain that Glory to which he will assuredly bring thee. This is that Covenant with Christ, or faith in him, which I have been all this while perswading thee to; wherein I told thee is contained thy Covenant with God the Father, to love and honour him above all, as thy Maker, Ruler, and End; and with the Holy Ghost, to be sanctified and led by him. Which Covenant every man must be cordially entred into, that he may be fit to partake of the Lord's Supper, whereby he does profess to consecrate himself to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that is, to be a true Christian, as by his Baptism he stands engaged. And this is the third qualification which is requisite to all Communicants. And if I should name no more, hence it may sufficiently appear who is fit to come to this Ordinance; even he that being acquainted with the Doctrin of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, believes all that is there related to be true, and is sensible of, and deeply humbled for all his sins, being stedfastly resolved, by Gods assistance, presently from this time forward to forsake them, and is unfeignedly willing to receive the Lord Jesus, to be his Saviour, upon the terms of the Gospel, that is (as I shall next speak particularly) he that relies upon him alone for the pardon of his sins, and is willing to be sanctified by his holy Spirit, that he may be made fit for an everlasting communion with God, upon whom he hath placed his highest love. This is the man whom Christ will bid welcome to his Table. Wherefore, Reader, if this be a description of the state of thy Soul, let not Satan or thy own fearful misgiving heart perswade thee, that thou art unfit to partake of the priviledges held forth to believers; but with a cheerful boldness address thy self to this Feast, which thy gracious Lord hath appointed for thy refreshment and strengthning, till he take thee to himself into his heavenly Kingdom.

Since I have already thus far discovered, what kind of persons Communicants ought to be, from the nature of this Ordinance, as it is for a Remembrance of Christ and his

his Death, which cannot be without the knowledge of him, repentance for ſin, and believing in him, I may therefore be briefer in the particulars that follow, in ſhewing what more is concluded in Remembring Chriſt at the Sacrament, ſince they ſerve farther to illuſtrate and confirm what I have already mentioned concerning the qualifications of the Recievers, and ſince I may repeat ſome of them in directing thoſe that intend to Communicate.

CHAP. VI.

IV. *A right Remembring the benefits procured for us by the Death of Chriſt.* 1. *Juſtification*

HE that remembers Chriſt's death as he ought, *cannot but remember what were the benefits purchaſt by his Death for thoſe that believe in him*: which benefits are held forth and repreſented in the Sacrament, and by it conveyed and aſſured to the worthy Receivers, and do call for ſuitable diſpoſitions and affections in them, as I ſhall ſhew particularly. Of theſe benefits I ſhall name three which are the principal, and contain all the reſt: And theſe are *Juſtification*, *Sanctification*, and *Glorification*.

1. The firſt is *Juſtification* or the *pardon of ſin* (for the difference betwixt them is ſo ſmall, that I ſhall here take no notice of it) which pardon Chriſt hath obtained by the ſatisfaction he made to divine juſtice, by his perfect obedience and grievous ſufferings, for the ſake whereof, Believers are releaſt from the rigour and curſe of the Law, received into the favour of God, and preſerved from thoſe miſeries which otherwiſe had according to their deſert befaln them, *Gal.* 3. 1. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the Law, being made a curſe for us*, Heb. 1. 3. *When he had by himſelf purged our ſins, &c.* Heb. 9. 26—*But now he hath appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf*, Rom. 3. 23, 24. *For all have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God; being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt*; with multitudes of the like places. And the Bread and Wine ſet apart for the Sacrament, do repreſent Chriſt's

Body that was *given and broken for us*, Luk. 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 24. and his Blood which was ſhed to procure our pardon, as you may read expreſly, *Mat.* 26. 27, 28. *And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of it: For this is my Blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins*; that is, this Wine doth ſignifie and repreſent my Blood, in which the New Covenant betwixt God and Man is founded and eſtabliſh'd, and by which remiſſion of ſins, and all other conſequent benefits of this New Teſtament or Covenant are purchas'd. And thoſe Sacramental Actions of giving and receiving the Bread and Wine to eat and drink it, do hold forth and confirm the mutual Covenant betwixt God and Man. As it ſeals to the Covenant on Man's part, (that he will receive Chriſt as he is offered, and be devoted to him and to God by him) I have ſpoken to it under the foregoing Head; and to all who ſincerely do thus, God hereby ſeals to them, that he will be their God, reconciled to them through his Son; and that Chriſt with all his benefits ſhall be theirs; and therefore as one principal benefit, that all their iniquities for Chriſt's ſake ſhall be forgiven them. Even as the Miniſter, who is here in God's ſtead, offers them the Bread and Wine, whereby a crucified Chriſt, with the bleſſings he purchs'd, are ſignified, ſo doth God make over all theſe to a believing Soul, which doth as really and truly, though in a ſpiritual manner, receive Jeſus Chriſt, by conſenting to take him for his Lord and Saviour, as with his hand he takes, and with his mouth eats, and drinks the Bread and Wine. Now in anſwer to that particular priviledge, pardon of ſin, which hereby is aſſured to us, there is required in us a *dependance upon Chriſt for this pardon* that is, an expectation and hope, that God for his Son's ſake will pardon our ſins, that they ſhall not be charged upon us, to condemn us at the great judgment day, but that we ſhall then be cleared from all accuſations, and ſecured from thoſe miſeries into which the ungodly ſhall be ſentenced; and this we are to look upon as ſealed to us by the Sacrament. And it is to be conſidered, that this dependance upon Chriſt for a pardon, is one part, or an effect of our ſaving faith in him: for they who believe that he is the Redeemer of the world, and are willing to be ſaved by him from their wickedneſs, and ſo from hell, they will rely on him

to

to obtain forgiveneſs by him, and according to the knowledge they have of their Repentance and Faith, the conditions of this mercy, they will the more confidently expect it. But as it is often times difficult to bring the trueſt Believers to this act of Faith, in that meaſure as may give them comfort, ſo it is more difficult to beat the moſt negligent out of this refuge, who would cheat themſelves with a conceit, that to hope for mercy through Chriſt is all that's required of them. But know, the pardon which God offers is upon condition of our willingneſs to accept of Chriſt to teach, and to ſanctifie and ſave us, which I have oft mentioned, as that believing in Chriſt which the Goſpel calls for, and entails ſalvation upon; and then they in whom this willingneſs is wrought, are bound to believe, that all God's promiſes, made to ſuch as by his Grace they find themſelves to be, ſhall be fulfill'd; and therefore particularly they ought to believe, that according to his promiſe, he will *blot out all their tranſgreſſions*, for his ſake *who was bruiſed for them*; and upon the ſtrength or weakneſs of this perſwaſion doth their comfort very much depend, though not their ſafety ſo much, ſince the want of it commonly proceeds from an ignorance of themſelves, rather than an unbelif of the promiſes; to which I ſhall ſay ſomething hereafter, leſt any ſhould think they muſt not come to the Sacrament, becauſe they have not a confident perſwaſion that their ſins ſhall be pardoned, and therefore think they have no Faith. Now from what hath been ſaid, it farther appears, *That none but penitent believers are worthy Receivers*; for to ſuch, and none but ſuch, doth God in the Covenant of Grace promiſe pardon, and therefore to them only it is that he conveys and aſſures it by the Sacrament, which is a Seal of that Covenant, and ratifies no more than what that promiſeth. And indeed none but ſuch do in good earneſt deſire or ſeek after a pardon; for none but they are ſoundly convinced of their need of it, by reaſon of their breach of that Law which doth accuſe and condemn them. Ignorant ſenſeleſs ſinners, that run on deſperately in their wicked courſes, without any thought or fear of thoſe judgments that are ready to be executed upon them, and never take to heart how they have incenſed the Divine Majeſty againſt them, do not uſe much to buſie their thoughts how they ſhould turn away this wrath, and prevent this

misery. The fear of ſickneſs, poverty, diſgrace, or the like temporal evils, doth much more take them up than the fears of Hell, and accordingly their daily care is to avoid thoſe rather than this. He that is ſick prizes the Phyſitian, whileſt he that is in health, or thinks he is ſo, cares little for him, or his Medicines. A poor priſoner that hath newly heard the ſentence of condemnation from the Judges mouth, and knows he's a dead man in Law, what would not he do to get a pardon from the King? Or oh how thankful would he be to the man that ſhould do it for him? whileſt another that knows not himſelf to be guilty (though he may be really ſo) would take himſelf little beholden to any one that ſhould make him ſuch an offer, to wit, of the King's pardon. Even thus ſhould you come to a ſtupid Sinner, and be able to aſſure him that God was reconciled to him, he would be very little moved with the tidings, for this is not a matter whereof he uſed to make much doubt, or greatly concern himſelf one way or other: but could you ſurprize him with the news of a great Eſtate befallen to him, oh what an extaſie of joy would you caſt the poor man into! I confeſs when theſe careleſs ones come to be awakened on a death-bed, or by a fit of ſickneſs, then they do indeed earneſtly deſire, that their ſins may be forgiven them. Notwithſtanding the great affection they had to the Devil's drudgery, they have no mind to receive the wages which he affords them. Though they have loved ſin ſo well, that they would never part with it whilſt they could keep it; yet ſince now they can keep it no longer, by no means are they willing to go to that Hell to which their ſins directly led them. Loth they are to take leave of their luſts, till they come to the very mouth of the Grave, but then fain they would rid their hands of them; for they know, if they go together one ſtep farther they are like to rue it for ever. Whilſt they could taſt the pleaſures of ſin they wallowed ſecurely in it, but now ſickneſs hath ſpoil'd their taſte, and put them out of temper, they ſeem ſomewhat more indifferent to it; but eſpecially fearing leſt they have already had all the ſweetneſs, and that nothing but bitter dregs are at the bottom of the cup, therefore now at length they would throw it out of their hand. And this I fear is ordinarily the beſt of a Death-bed Repentance, which many build their hopes ſo much upon.

They

They may be in good earneſt afraid of being damned, and therefore are ſorry that they have brought themſelves into ſuch danger: But what's this to an ingenuous ſorrow for having offended a good and gracious God, and to a loathing of ſin for its own vileneſs? which are neceſſary to make our repentance right. And not only at death, its like, but in time of health alſo, there are many who would be very willing to have their ſins pardoned, if it might be, upon any other condition than forſaking them. If bare confeſſion and begging of mercy might ſerve turn, or if coming to the Sacrament might ſerve turn, and yet ſtill they might live as they liſt, few would go without a pardon. But remember, God no where aſſures pardon to any man abſolutely, but upon a certain condition, which except we perform, we cannot look for the promiſed mercy. What this condition is, I have before told you, even that you ſhould repent of, and give diligence to forſake all ſin, and receive Chriſt to be your perfect Saviour: Upon no other terms therefore expect to have Pardon confirmed to you by the Sacrament, which will no farther avail you than as it receives power and efficacy from the promiſe, without which it is a ſeal to a blank Paper that will warrant you to claim nothing. Suppoſe a Landlord ſhould make you a Leaſe of an Houſe, upon condition that you would own your ſelf his Tenant, and yearly pay him ſome ſmall quit-rent, and ſhould ſet his Seal to this Leaſe, all this would ſtand you in no ſtead, if you denied that you was his Tenant, and refuſe to pay the Rent he required. Wherefore to know whether your hope of pardon be upon good grounds, and ſuch as will not fail you, examine whether you are ſuch kind of perſons as I have before deſcribed, whether you are humbled for, and brought out of love with every ſin, and to firm *purpoſe of heart cleave to the Lord Jeſus.*

To bring you thus to depend upon Chriſt for a pardon, in a right manner, and upon ſure grounds, the conſiderations I laid down under the laſt particular may be of uſe, ſince this is one part of that faith in Chriſt, which I there exhorted you to; that was an acceptance of him in all his Offices; this hath a peculiar reſpect to his Prieſtly Office, and is called *Faith in his blood*, Rom. 3. 25. Only to add a word or two more, for the quickning of all ſuch who have not much laid it to heart, how to get their ſins pardoned,

doned, as if they thought it was a thing of no great conſequence: Conſider, I beſech you, whether the incarnation, Life and Death of Chriſt was not a matter of huge importance to the world? and tell me, Reader, doſt not think thou art as much concerned herein as any other man? Had'ſt not thou as much need of his Death as any? And therefore doth it not ſtand thee upon, to ſee whether thou ſhareſt in the benefits of it as much as it doth any man breathing? And tell me farther, if all this preparation in the Goſpel hath been made for thee only, and Chriſt hath come down from heaven, and ſuffered on the Croſs for thy ſake alone, that thou mighteſt be ſaved by him on the ſame terms that now thou may'ſt; and ſhould have ſent thee a meſſage, calling thee by thy particular name, aſſuring thee of all this, and beſeeching thee to accept of theſe offers of life: doſt thou think all this would have convinced thee of the greatneſs of Divine love, and of thy need of mercy? And would it have awakened thee to make out after the ſame, and to do all that was required to obtain it? If ſo, why then wilt thou not be perſwaded to the ſame care? Since the Goſpel ſpeaks to thee as particularly as if it named thee; and the mercy is as great, and thy need of it as much as if thou alone waſt concerned in it; and thou ſhalt never have the leſs benefit, nay rather more, by having others to ſhare with thee in it: but thy miſery, if thou miſs of a pardon, will be never the leſs, for having many companions in the ſame ſad caſe with thy ſelf.

Once again let me ask thee, thou who now art ſo inſenſible of thy need of a pardon, that thou wilt not take pains to get it in the way thou art commanded, wouldſt thou be contented on any rates, abſolutely and expreſly to part with all hopes and expectations of it? If thou might'ſt be hired with a thouſand or ten thouſand pounds, would'ſt thou for ſuch a ſum of mony, profeſs thou didſt renounce all right and title to Jeſus Chriſt, and all hopes of mercy through him? Or would'ſt thou give this under thy hand in writing to the Devil, or to any man that would help thee to a great Eſtate? What wouldſt thou think of thoſe who ſhould do thus? would'ſt thou not look upon them as moſt wretched forlorn creatures? Why, be it known to thee, if through negligence and ſtupidity thou ſeek not out after an intereſt in Chriſt, that thou

mayſt

mayſt be pardoned and ſaved by him, thy condition will at length be found as miſerable as theirs. If there ſhould be certain Acres of ground in *Ireland*, promiſed to any one that would go thither to poſſeſs them, he that would not take the pains to go over, would have no more advantage by them, than he that ſhould formally renounce his right thereto: even ſo by careleſneſs and ſloth mayſt thou loſe all benefit by Chriſt, as certainly as thoſe poor creatures that are drawn to make compacts with the Devil, and ſell away their Souls for a thing of nought.

To conclude, If nothing I have hitherto ſaid will move thee, conſider, I entreat thee, whether this thy undervaluing of pardoning mercy will remain always. Sins thou haſt, I know thou wilt acknowledge, yea, many and great ſins, ſuch as would ſink thee to the loweſt hell if they be laid to thy charge. Do'ſt thou not grant this? And thou canſt not but know, that there will at length come a day of Reckoning for theſe thy ſins: And doſt thou think when thou muſt ſtand before the Judge, and give up thy account, that thou ſhalt not earneſtly deſire a pardon then? will it then ſeem as indifferent a thing as now it does? Then, I ſay, when without it thou muſt be ſentenced to keep company with the Devils in the midſt of ſcorching flames, for ever and ever? And thou canſt not ſure be ſo ignorant as not to know, that none ſhall have a pardon *then* but thoſe who got it *now*: that's a day for examining, and declaring what our eſtates are, whether good or bad, that we may be dealt with accordingly; not a time for getting them made better, if they were naught before. Wherefore if thou beeſt not a very Brute, only to mind what is before thee; if thou hadſt any foreſight, any belief of this Judgment-day that thou art going to, now rouſe up thy ſelf and with all ſpeed and induſtry labour to get that pardon, which within a while, to thy own moſt lively ſenſe will be ſo needful, and ſtand thee in ſo much ſtead. And when thou art wrought to ſuch a ſight of thy miſery as makes thee deſire after mercy, and to ſuch a loathing of thy ſins as fits thee for it, then thou may'ſt be aſſured, that God for Chriſt's ſake will be gracious to thee, and thou mayſt comfortably addreſs thy ſelf to the Sacrament, and take it as a farther aſſurance from God, that his promiſes of mercy ſhall be made good to thee.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The ſecond benefit is Sanctification.

2. THE ſecond great benefit purchas'd by the Death of Chriſt, and held forth in the Sacrament, is *Sanctifying, Saving Grace*, for the enlivening and ſtrengthening the Souls of Believers. There is no truth more plain in the whole Goſpel, than that one great end of Chriſt's Death was, to obtain from the Father, that the holy Spirit ſhould accompany the proclaming of the Goſpel, to enlighten the minds and ſoften the hearts of thoſe who ſhould not wilfully reſiſt his workings, that they might entertain the *truth in the love thereof*; and that on theſe, greater meaſures of grace ſhould be poured forth, to make them in all things conformable to their Maker, according to the capacity of their natures; which was the great deſign of the Redeemer, even to reſtore Apoſtate creatures to the image of God wherein they were created, that ſo they might be made meet for his ſervice here, and the fruition of him hereafter. A moſt lamentable miſtake it is to confine Chriſt's death only to the procuring of a pardon, and keeping ſinners out of Hell, ſince this was but in order to a work of grace on their hearts, and only ſuch who ſubmit to this work ſhall at laſt have a ſhare in the abſolute pardon. For ſuppoſe a company of Priſoners were taken in War, who being weak and wounded, cannot return into their own Country, but muſt preſently be put to death by the King that took them; and in the mean time comes their own Prince, and pays a great ſum to obtain, that the execution of them may be put off for ſome time, and that his Phyſician may uſe medicines, and apply plaiſters to as many as are willing, and that all ſuch, when they are made whole, ſhall be ſent to their own homes; and the reſt who will not be ruled by the Phyſician, but ſpit out his potions, becauſe they are bitter, and throw away his plaiſters, becauſe they make them ſmart, they are to remain in their priſon, and be put to death as they were ſentenced. Here we ſee the ranſom that was paid, was firſt to ſtop the ſlaughter of the priſoners, and to get liberty to

uſe

uſe means for their recovery to health and ſoundneſs; and ſecondly to obtain, that the recovered ſhould be ſet free to return to their own country? and not only the contempt of the ranſome, but of the Phyſician, would bring Death. Thus had we by the Fall, both brought our ſelves into danger of preſent deſtruction, and diſabled our Souls, that we could not return to that ſtate whence we fell; but the Son of God undertaking our Redemption, obtained for us, that the ſentence of condemnation ſhould not ſpeedily be executed, and that there ſhould be aſſured hopes of eſcaping deſtruction, and returning to happineſs, for all thoſe who make not their condition deſperate, by continuance in ſin, and rejecting of the cure which his Spirit would work upon them: Now the work of his Spirit is to plant and increaſe grace in their hearts, to heal the diſeaſes, and remove the weakneſs which ſin hath cauſed, that they may be enabled to walk in the ways of holineſs to their everlaſting reſt; and the ſending forth of his healing Spirit was the fruit of his blood: Now as it will aſſuredly damn men to deſpiſe the blood of Chriſt, as if it was of no force to be a ranſom, nor to attain thoſe ends for which the Goſpel ſaith it was ſhed, ſo is it as dangerous and damnable to reſiſt and ſlight the Spirit of Chriſt, let them pretend what eſteem they will for his blood. A like miſtake alſo it is, flowing from the former, to limit the notion of *free grace* to meer pardoning mercy, whenas it includes ſanctifying Grace alſo: for in the inſtance now given, the Phyſick I hope was a free gift to the priſoners, as the ranſom that was paid for them, notwithſtanding this was without them, and the other to be taken into them. And in like manner is the giving of the Spirit into us, as purely from the grace and mercy of God (though merited by Chriſt) as the giving of his Son for us, & accepting of us for his ſake. This I was willing to hint, leſt any when they hear or read of being ſaved by *Free grace*, ſhould dream of a Salvation to be had by a meer pardon, without being ſanctified by thy Spirit.

That the making men holy in their hearts and lives was a principal end of Chriſt's Death, without which no happineſs is to be attained, is, I ſay, a truth ſo evident in the very tenour of the Goſpel, that it may ſeem needleſs to produce particular proofs; yet amongſt the reſt read theſe few, *Eph.* 2. 10. *We are his workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus*

Jesus unto good works, &c. *Eph.* 5. 25, 26, 27. — *Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it*, &c. *and that it might be holy and without blemish*, 1 John. 3. 8. *The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil.* 1 Pet. 3. 24. *Who bare our sins, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness*, Tit. 3. 4, 5, 6. — *According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.* Read also *Math.* 1. 22. *Luke.* 1. 7, 5. *Rom.* 6. 11. *Gal.* 1. 4. *Tit.* 2. 12, 13, 14. *Heb.* 9. 14. Now though I acknowledge it is by the help of the Spirit, that we are brought to believe; for *faith it self is the gift of God*, Eph. 2. 8. yet I think we shall ordinarily find the promises of the Spirit to be made to those who are already Believers, to advance and carry on the work of God upon their Souls. And to this end, and of this nature is that Grace which is signified and given forth by the Sacrament, even to refresh and nourish the Souls of Believers, to confirm and increase those Graces that are wrought in them, and to bring them forward to farther degrees of perfection. And thus much the very Elements themselves do teach us: for as Bread is the support and stay of life, and Wine that which makes glad the heart of man, and both are needful for the maintaining of life, and increasing our strength, so are the Body and Blood of Christ alike necessary and useful to our Souls: for he himself hath told us, that his *flesh is meat indeed, and his Blood is drink indeed, and that he who eats his flesh and drinks his Blood dwelleth in him and hath eternal life*, with much more to the same purpose, *John* 6. The proper meaning whereof, as will appear by the Context, and the occasion of that Discourse, I suppose, is, That they who believe in him, having the same expectations of spiritual life from him, that they have of temporal life from their food, and accordingly receive, digest, and improve his doctrin, hoping for remission of sins through his Blood, giving entertainment to his Spirit, and are filled and fed with those graces which he gives out, that that all such shall live for ever. And then in a secondary sense, these words may be applyed to the Sacrament; so far as this faith in Christ, whereby grace is expected and derived from him, is here particularly acted: for thus he

who

who in the Sacrament eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Christ hath eternal life; that is, he who comes with that fitness of Soul as to be made partaker of the blessings and mercies hereby presented, and earnestly desires, that of Christs fulness he may receive suitable supplies of Grace. To the same purpose seems the Apostle to speak, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? and the Bread which we break is it not the Communion of the body of Christ? For we being many members are one body.* As if he should have said, Hereby we have a communion with Christ himself, we profess our relation to, and interest in him; and the benefits which come by him are communicated to us who truly believe in him; his Spirit is diffused and shed abroad upon us, and thereby we, who make up one mystical body, whereof he is the Head, being united and ingrafted into him, as members do live by him, being acted and upheld by that life and vigour which he gives and continues to us.

Since then here is Spiritual food, sanctifying Grace held forth and communicated to Souls rightly disposed, this farther informs us what kind of persons Communicants ought to be. The dispositions of Soul particularly suited to this benefit are, 1. *An earnest desire after grace to be given in,* and 2. *A resolution to improve this grace received.* Hither Christians are to come, earnestly longing to have communion with Christ himself, who is not only the Master of the Feast, but the very food whereupon the Believer lives; and this communion we have by his liberal communications of the graces of his Spirit to necessitous Souls. This desire of Grace is that which is signified by those expressions of *hungring* and *thirsting*; which we so often meet with in Scripture; answerable to which the Spiritual things desired are represented by things to be eaten and drank, as by Bread, Meat, Milk Water, and Wine. And they are here shadowed forth under the Elements of Bread and Wine, and must be hungred after by all that come to this Ordinance; which teacheth us, *that none are fit to come, that have not already received such beginnings of grace, as may cause them to long for more*; who have not such a Spiritual life wrought in them, as may put them upon care to have this life supported and increas'd. None can feel hunger but they that live; none can desire after greater measures of Grace, who have

not

not in ſome ſort known and taſted the ſweetneſs and excellency thereof. But no humble Souls need therefore be diſcouraged, as if they were not worthy to feaſt at this Table, where none are welcome but ſuch as have true Grace wrought in them, ſince they may be confident of their acceptance, if they can really find in themſelves an appetite to the proviſions made for them, an hearty and *ſincere* deſire, that their Spiritual wants may be ſupplied, their weakneſs ſtrengthned, and all their diſtempers healed: And what true Chriſtian, whoſe Grace is never ſo low, but finds in himſelf a love to, and a longing after more? But this indeed condemns, thoſe who feel no need of any nouriſhment for their Souls, and therefore either wholly neglect Sacraments, and other means whereby it is to be had; or elſe come without any ſtomach at all, and content themſelves with the ſhell and outſide of the duty, which will never feed them. Theſe full Souls, that loath the Honey-combe are like to be ſent empty away, whilſt the hungry only ſhall be filled with good things. Now to ſuch ſickly, liſtleſs Souls, that even nauſeate the moſt wholeſome food, I would ſay ſomething briefly in order to their cure, to bring them ſo far into frame that they may come with quickned appetites, and enlarged deſires to the Lord's Table, as perceiving there are ſuch good things here to be had, which they do moſt of all ſtand in need of.

1. In order hereto, labour to *get ſenſible what needy empty creatures you are*; for till then you are not like to ſeek out for a ſupply. Conſider, I mean, chiefly how deſtitute you are by nature, and to this very day, of that which is the true riches, the beauty and dignity of the Soul, in that you are ſo unlike to God, ſo full of corruption and wickedneſs, ſo empty of that Spiritual wiſdom, that holineſs, humility, heavenly-mindedneſs, and the like excellencies, which alone can render you amiable in the ſight of your Maker. You cannot imagine, if you have well ſtudied your own hearts, that you brought into the world with you, all that Grace which is of abſolute neceſſity, to perfect and accompliſh your Natures; and it is too ſad a ſign you are ſtill without it, whilſt you have no more mind to thoſe means which God hath ordained for the conveyance and increaſe of it. How happy a thing now was it, if you were but throughly

convinced

convinced of your own wants; when you do but perceive you need food, or rayment, or Phyſick, how induſtrious and impatient are you till you have one way or other got what you would have? And thus ardently deſirous would you be after the Graces of God's Spirit, if you did rightly apprehend, that theſe are the food, and cloathing, and Phyſick of the Soul. But alas, how do people generally labour under the ſottiſhneſs, and ſelf-conceitedneſs, which was charged upon the *Laodicean* Church, that *thought her ſelf rich, increas'd with goods, needing nothing, and knew not that ſhe was wretched and miſerable, poor and blind, and naked*, Rev. 3. 17. 'Tis one of the greateſt difficulties in the world to bring men to judge of their poverty or riches by the temper and frame of their Souls; to convince them that they are poor and needy, whileſt they are graceleſs, though they ſhould over-flow in wealth and abundance of all external things.

2. Wherefore in the next place, let me adviſe you *to beware of a ſecret miſtake which ruins millions, in imagining that outward comforts may ſerve well enough to make amends for all your neceſſities*; that the husks of worldly enjoyments may ſerve inſtead of the Bread that is in the Fathers houſe. Oh take heed of inordinate thirſting after theſe puddels, or of wallowing in them. Do not ſo eagerly purſue ſuch unſatisfactory trifles as carnal profits and pleaſures, which divert you from the purſuit of thoſe things that moſt concern you; but examine well what there is in them to do good to an immortal Soul, which you cannot but account your beſt part. Beware then of being ſo devoted to the pleaſing of your fleſh, that you ſhould be thereby ſtupified to a regardleſneſs of your Soul. The luſcious fare which the world affords, cloys the mind of man, and ſpoils his appetite, and puts him out of reliſh with his own moſt proper food. This is the undoing of the moſt, they are ſo full of the Creature, if not in their hands yet in their hearts, that they have no mind nor room, to entertain any thing of God there. Every man breathing finds himſelf a needy Creature, that cannot live upon himſelf, but muſt have ſomething from without brought in to give him ſatisfaction: but then the miſery is, they think their wants are all of that nature, that things here below may ſupply them. The

poor think there is nothing they need ſo much as better food and raiment, more plenty and eaſe and eſteem in the world; and they who abound in theſe things, becauſe they ſee others excel them, think they want ſuch and ſuch greater Eſtates and Dignities to make them happy. Though they find after all their attainments, that ſtill they are reſtleſs, diſcontented, and wanting ſomething elſe, they ſcarce know what; which might convince them, that it is only from God they can receive ſatisfaction by having their natures perfected with thoſe Graces which may fit them for that communion with him in love and delight, wherein the Soul of man can only find reſt and contentment. This, I ſay, they might learn from thoſe reſtleſs infinite deſires of their own hearts, if they would but heedfully attend to the nature thereof; but being more cruel to themſelves than any Parent to his Child, when the Soul calls for Bread, they give it a Stone; endeavouring to put it off with things that concern the body alone, whilſt that within them, which is moſt needy, ſtill remains ſo, and is ſuffered to pine and ſtarve. As if an hungry man ſhould fill his mouth with meat, and let nothing down into his Stomach. Whilſt you are fondly endeavouring to quiet your minds, and accompliſh your ſelves with any thing that is without your Souls, be it riches, pleaſures, honours, friends, and all the accommodations of the outward man, which the World moſt dotes upon, you are as verily beſotted and deceived, as he thinks to eaſe a violent pain at his heart with putting on a rich Suit of Cloaths; or to ſupply the want of enlivening Blood and Spirits by painting his face. Your neceſſities and diſeaſes are deep and inward; your very Souls are out of order, and nothing in the World will do you any good, but what gets within you, and changes your apprehenſions, deſires and affections, and makes you quite other perſons than now you are. Wherefore I would beg you to fix this truth deep in your minds, *that ſince you are become poor and naked through the loſs of Gods Image, which was the riches and beauty of the reaſonable creature, it's never like to be well with you, till you be again reſtored to his Image, which is by being brought to the knowledge and love of him, to an univerſal ſubmiſſion, and exact conformity to his will.*

3. And when you are brought to this knowledge of your

your wants, and the nature of them, then consider well, *that it is by Jesus Christ alone that you can be satisfied and supplied. The Law was given by* Moses, *but by him comes grace and truth*, 1 *John* 1. 17. He is the Mediator, through whom, and for whose sake we receive from God whatever our Souls stand in need of. He by his death hath purchas'd all things necessary for our salvation; he is ascended on high, and hath received Gifts for his People. As King and Head of his Church, he communicates to his Members those Graces, that by his death and intercession he hath obtained for them, and they are repleniſh'd with the *fulness of him who filleth all in all.* And then you are to take notice, that Christ hath appointed duties to be performed by us, and set up ordinances, which we are diligently to attend upon, and by his Spirit accompanying them, he conveys Grace to the hearts of those that are conscionable in the use of these means. Such are hearkening to, and meditating upon the Word, *Joh.* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them by thy truth, thy word is truth.* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new-born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.* And Prayer to the Father in his name, *John* 14. 13. *Luke* 11. 13. — *How much more will your heavenly Father give the Spirit to those that ask him?* Jam. 1. 5. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.* Such also is the Sacrament of Baptism, being duly improved; *Gal.* 3. 27. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*; Rom. 6. 3, 4. 1 Pet. 3. 21. And lastly, this receiving of the Lord's Supper, which is our feeding upon Christ who is the Paschal Lamb sacrificed for us, and herein to Believers, in a Spiritual sense, is afforded a *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, as we may find in the Apostle's words before mentioned. And when you have but arrived to a sense of your indigence, and Christ's fulness suitable thereto, there will necessarily arise in you, desires after a participation of that fulness, which will bring you to, and prepare you for those Ordinances, wherein these desires may be gratified.

Lastly, I would advise you to *beware, of ever entertaining a conceit, that you are become so full now, that you need nothing:* for that's a plain sign you are poor and know it not; your Stomachs are filled with Wind instead of solid

meat. And whilſt you are puft up with this ſelf-conceit, you will be hindred from ſeeking after what you really want. He that thinks his Barns full when they are empty, may through his miſtake firſt live in idleneſs, and after come to beggery. He that dreams of ſuch perfection, as makes all helps Chriſt hath appointed needleſs to him, neither knows himſelf, nor conſiders what a God he hath to ſerve, nor what a Law he hath given him to walk by. It's much to be feared, that he who thinks he hath Grace enough, hath yet got no ſaving Grace at all. He that knows enough is very ignorant, he that's humble enough is ſtill exceeding proud, and ſo of the reſt. For *he that hath taſted that the Lord is gracious*, longs after fuller communion with him. He that drinks of the Water Chriſt gives, though his ſickly thirſt after Creatures will be cured, yet will ſuch a thirſt after more of Chriſt ariſe in him, as will never be quench'd, till he be drench'd into the Ocean of grace and joy. Wherefore ſtudy thy ſelf, ſtudy the duty of this whole preſent ſtate, wherein we are enjoyn'd to *grow in grace*; and learn hence ſo much humility, ſo much wiſdom, as to own thy neceſſities, and not to go about to cover them, for they will not always be hid; but rather uſe all means to ſupply them whilſt they are afforded.

And as there is required in all Receivers an earneſt longing after ſanctifying Grace, which is here vouchſafed; ſo the other qualification ſuitable hereto, I told you is a *Reſolution to improve this grace*; that is to lay it out, and ſhew forth the fruit of it in an holy converſation. This is an effect of the former, and indeed neceſſarily flows from the nature of Grace, which is no way deſirable but for uſe and exerciſe; nor is it poſſible that it ſhould ordinarily lie ſtill in the heart, and not be brought forth into Act, and ſhewn in the life. He that deſires patience, humility, purity, temperance, to what purpoſe is it but to overcome the temptations which he meets with in the World, to the contrary vices, and to ſhew forth theſe fruits of the Spirit in his converſation? Whence it appears, that no man is worthy to come to the Lord's Table, *who is not reſolved by the grace of God to live an holy life*, and to be led by the Spirit in all his ways. He that hath got any ſin which he is reſolv'd to keeep, is not like to have any deſire after that Grace which ſhould

mortifie

mortifie and quell his ſin; nor any mind to remember that Death which was to *deliver us from this preſent evil world*. He's like to be far from a right remembrance of Chriſt, who will not be perſwaded to imitate him: for certainly that's one end of our remembring his Death, that we may thereby be drawn to follow his Example, which he gave us then as well as in his life, by his conſtancy, patience, charity to his Enemies, and ready reſignation of himſelf to his Fathers Will. *As he walked, ſo ought we to walk*, and from his very death may we fetch directions for our life. This reſolution for holineſs which I am ſpeaking of, is indeed one branch of our Faith in Chriſt, being no other than our conſent to take him for our King, to guide and govern us in all our thoughts, words, and actions: and therefore having ſaid ſomething to it under that Head, as alſo the former of Repentance, I ſhall at preſent paſs it over.

CHAP. VIII.

The third benefit is eternal happineſs with God.

3. THE laſt of thoſe benefits which I named, obtained for us by the death of Chriſt, and to be remembred at the Sacrament, *is eternal happineſs*. It is by his *reſurrection from the dead*, and conſequently by his death, that Believers have a *lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for them*, 1 Pet. 3. 4. It was his *Blood that redeemed them to be Kings and Prieſts to God*, Rev. 5. 9, 10. *He gave his fleſh for the life of the world*, Joh. 6. 51. By Jeſus Chriſt God calls us to eternal Glory, 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. He opened the entrance into Paradiſe, which ſin had ſhut up. It was his will not only that they who believe in him, ſhould be kept from the place where Satan was, but that they ſhould alſo *be with him where he is*, Joh. 17. 24. This he pay'd for, this he died for; and is gone before to prepare a place for them, and keeps them here to prepare them for that place, and being ready they ſhall enter into the Kingdom. He receives their Spirits when they die, and will raiſe up their Bodies at the laſt day. *Now their life is hid with Chriſt in God, and when he ap-*

pear, then shall they also appear with him in glory, Col. 3, 3, 4. Be we sure then this death of Christ cannot be remembred as it ought, if the Glory purchas'd thereby be forgotten. How can we remember a dying Christ, but withall we must call to mind, that he vanquish'd this death, is risen again and ascended into Glory, whither in due time he will exalt his People? Moreover that Covenant which is sealed to by this Sacrament, promiseth an everlasting Kingdom to Believers: and can any man forget such a benefit, even whilst he is receiving a confirmation of his right to it? Again here is that Grace given out which is the pledge, the seed, the beginning and foretast of Glory; here is the Meat that endures to everlasting life; and who can forget his Journeys end whilst he is taking food to strengthen him for his Travel? To conclude, here's a communion of Saints, which does in some measure shadow out and signifie that perfect communion which they shall have one with another, when all the Elect shall be gathered from the four corners of the Earth, and with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* shall sit down, and for ever remain in the Kingdom of God: Now hence it appears, that the worthy receiver must be one, *who hath taken the heavenly glory for his portion*; who hath got a treasure above, and there placed his heart and hopes; for none but such a one can with any life and raisedness remember this Glory, which is to be revealed. He that is wont to solace himself with the contemplation thereof, will rejoyce in every thing that hath a relation to it, much more in the remembrance of that price that was paid for it. But how can the Earthworm, whose Soul lies groveling upon the dust, bring himself to any affectionate thoughts of hidden treasures, which cannot be got into his Bags nor Coffers, which he cannot so much as get a sight of? Nor can the swinish Voluptuous sinners, that feed upon none but the muddy delights of sense, take any comfort in the forethoughts of pure and spiritual pleasures, such as are prepared for exalted purified Souls. Any, whoever they be, that place their chief contentment on Earth, are not like, with any pleasure, to think of that time, when they must leave this Earth, and enter upon another state, where are no such sensual Enjoyments as here they bless themselves in. Ignorant, narrow Souls have no heart to think of what

shall

shall be thousands and millions of years to come. These poor sordid Spirits are so glewed to the little trifles of the world, that they look not so high as after Crowns and Scepters which Christ hath in store for his faithful followers. And they who never took much pains to secure and clear up their evidence for Heaven, but have taken it for granted, that they must needs go thither at last, or count it an indifferent thing whether they do or not, will be far from those lively apprehensions of the greatness of that love which purchas'd it, and of the excellency of the bliss it self, which are necessary for him who can rightly remember either.

Now to bring those who are yet strangers hereto, to such an apprehension of the Glory to come by Christ, that they may chuse it as their portion, and so be joyfully taken up in the expectations thereof: In one word I would desire thee, whoever thou art, that hast but so much common reason as to distinguish between good and evil, to consider well whether thou hast not a Soul as well as a Body, and whether this Soul must not remain in being and alive, when thy Body is rotting in the Earth, and whether then it doth not as much, yea infinitely more concern thee to seek out for somewhat, that may at that time make thy Soul happy, than for what may now please thy Senses? Yea, since thou must live somewhere for ever, think whether it is not more worthy thy care, to provide for an everlasting well-being, than for the comforts of a frail short life. If thou art thus far convinced, then make an impartial search, whether there be any thing here below that's able to make thee perfectly happy. Thy Houses and Lands, thy Pleasures and Honours, will any, or all of these give in all that felicity which thou desirest or needest? Are they of the same nature with thy Soul; or will they last as long as it will last; must not all thy merry days at length come to an end? And wilt thou be ever the better for all thou hast enjoy'd when once it's over? Will the remembrance give thee any satisfaction? *In that night, wherein thy Soul shall be required of thee,* what advantage wilt thou have from the *goods thou had'st laid up for many years*? yea, or from those goods thou had'st liv'd upon the years before? When the Earth and all its works shall be burnt up, where will all thy possessions and treasures be? If thou hast nothing to live on, but what will

be turned into flames what wilt thou then fix upon? At that day when there ſhall be no marrying or giving in marriage, no Wives or Children, no Relation or Friends, whoſe ſociety will afford any ſuch comfort as here it did; when the intereſt of Princes and great ones, whoſe favour was here thy ſhelter and thy Pride, ſhall all be vaniſh'd, what will thy confidence in men avail thee? Examine theſe or any other outward prop whereon thou leaneſt, and ſee whether it be not a broken Read. And if ſo, except thou art reſolv'd againſt thy one happineſs, methinks thou ſhould'ſt now only make choice of that which will never give thee cauſe to repent what thou did'ſt, as all things will, but the eternal Glory which God hath promiſed to thoſe that love him. But he that can once upon good grounds ſay, *This Heaven is mine, I ſhall ſee the face of God with joy, and live in his love for ever*, may now lead a ſerene and chearful life in the midſt of all occurrences; and need not to be daunted at Death it ſelf, but rather rejoyce, as it takes him to the poſſeſſion of his treaſure, wafts him to his own home. Wherefore if thou love thy life, be perſwaded to aim at this higheſt glory: Let nothing ſhort of it content thee; think no condition hard to get it; reſt not till thou haſt made it as ſure as thou canſt that it's thine: And then having thus fixt thy end, thou mayſt travel on with alacrity and ſpeed, and take abundance of comfort in the fore-thoughts of thy future bliſs, in uſing all helps afforded in thy journy to it, and in the remembrance of that precious Blood which was ſhed to purchaſe it, and by conſequence wilt be fitted to celebrate the Sacrament.

CHAP. IX.

V. *It muſt be a thankful Remembrance.*

IT is not poſſible that the death of Chriſt can be remembred as it ought, without the *moſt hearty and unfeigned thankfulneſs to God, for ſo great and glorious a mercy.* Hath he the heart of a man that can contemplate the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the infinite unſpeakable benefits thereby procur'd for poor ſinners, and not find himſelf raiſed to return

thanks

thanks and praiſe to God, for his gracious dealings with mankind? This duty is ſo proper to the Lord's Supper, that hence it anciently obtained the name of *Euchariſt*, a return of thanks. Since then, every man who partakes thereof, ought to be thus truly thankful to God for his love revealed in Chriſt, this again acquaints us what kind of perſons Communicants muſt be, namely, *ſuch who are capable of rendring acceptable praiſe to God*, which doth but give farther evidence of the neceſſity of thoſe qualifications before laid down. None but ſuch as have been made ſenſible of the evil of ſin, and of the danger they were thereby liable to, will be heartily thankful for that mercy which prevented this miſery, by purchaſing and vouchſafing the forgiveneſs of their ſins. How formal and hypocritical are his thanks like to be for Chriſt, who never yet ſaw, what need he ſtood in of him? Will he thank you for a Plaiſter that never felt himſelf wounded? Can he have any grateful ſenſe of the love that pluck'd poor ſinners as Brands out of the fire, who never perceived himſelf in any ſuch danger? Can he be thankful for eaſe and reſt, who never felt his ſtrong luſts, nor the curſe of the Law and wrath of God, as any load or burden upon him? Nor can he be thankful for the Grace that was given by Chriſt, who had far rather keep his ſins, than be renewed and ſanctified. Little thanks will he return for the light who is but diſturbed and troubled with it, and ſo far aſhamed by it, that he cannot purſue his wicked deſigns with that freedom and eagerneſs as he could before whilſt he was more in the dark, where he had ſtill rather remain. How can he thank God for Grace, who rejects and deſpiſeth it? For being taken out of the ſnares of the Devil, who wilfully faſtens himſelf into them? Will he praiſe God for liberty and ability to ſerve him, who ſaith of his ſervice, *what a wearineſs is it*? and thinks it would be better for him if he might live as he liſt, and never be put upon ſo much trouble as Godlineſs brings along with it? Nor can he be thankful for the Glory to be had by Chriſt, who hath not a ſound perſwaſion of the certainty and excellency of it, and who hath not firmly reſolved to take it for his portion. He that knows nothing better than bodily enjoyments, and would think himſelf undone was he ſtript of theſe, is like to be very cold in giving thanks for ſpiritual bleſſings. In a word, he that is ſenſible of no

great

great benefit he ſhall have by Chriſt either here or hereafter, cannot be expected to have any great meaſure of thankfulneſs for this mercy which he ſo little underſtands. And is this the caſe of all unhumbled, unſanctified ones, to whom the Goſpel is hid, their minds being darkened by the God of this World. And if theſe poor ſenſeleſs Creatures ſhould with a few feigned words pretend to give God thanks for Jeſus Chriſt, yet would it be but the Sacrifice of Fools and meer lip-ſervice, and therefore no way acceptable to the moſt holy God. Yea indeed they would hereby but very ſolemnly mock the Divine Majeſty, whilſt they thank him for thoſe mercies which they will not accept at his hands; praiſing him for Jeſus Chriſt and the benefits he brings, whilſt they will have none of him or them, on the terms that God propoundeth. No, no, it is only the broken-healed heart, the humble raiſed Soul, that can be feelingly and affectionately thankful to God for a Saviour, who hath wrote ſo great works for them and in them, and laid up ſuch great proviſions for the time to come. They that were *loſt but are found*, they that were *dead but are alive*, in theſe will their heavenly Father take pleaſure, and theſe will rejoyce in his love, and return praiſe to him, who *ſent his Son to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt*.

To bring men into ſuch a ſtate and frame, that they may be diſpoſed and enabled, from an inward ſenſe of his Goodneſs, to render ſuch thanks to the Father of Mercies, as may be well-pleaſing to him; I ſhould only need to repeat what was before laid down to bring them to accept of Chriſt, which when once they are brought to, and arrived to any hopes of their acceptance with God through him, then both in heart and voice, with their lips and lives will they adore and praiſe him, who *called them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*. Wherefore ſtudy well your many and great neceſſities which Chriſt alone can ſupply. Conſider to what miſeries by ſin you ſtand expoſed, from which he alone can keep you. Remember what he did and ſuffered, how low he condeſcended for the ſake of man, and remember your own utter unworthineſs, that ever the leaſt love or regard ſhould have been manifeſted to you; and yet conſider what great things are done for you; into how good a ſtate matters are brought, what abundant bleſſings are freely beſtowed on the humble

ble and believing, what rich and precious promiſes are made them, what mercies are given for this life, and that to come, Grace and Glory, and whatever is good for men, nothing is withheld from them. Let but the conſideration of all the rich and precious priviledges which Chriſt gives to his ſervants, ſink into thy Soul, and then thou wilt find it even impoſſible, not to magnifie the Authour and Purchaſer of ſuch Gifts; nor wilt thou be able to refrain from expreſſions of thy Gratitude and Love; and therefore mayſt worthily come to the Sacrament, there to exerciſe and expreſs thoſe holy affections.

CHAP. X.

VI. *It muſt produce a holy love to Saints.*

HE that rightly remembers the Death of Chriſt, and well conſiders the infinite love herein ſhewn to mankind, cannot but be thereby wrought to an *hearty love to all his fellow Chriſtians.* And that's the laſt qualification I ſhall mention, neceſſary for all Communicants, and which flows from their remembrance of Chriſt, to wit, *that they may be in charity with all men, and have an eſpecial endeared love to all true Chriſtians*, both thoſe that communicate with them and others. To this great duty of brotherly love we have the moſt forcible engagement that ever could be imagined, by the example of our bleſſed Lord laying down his life for us; and his behaviour at death, even praying for his perſecutors; doth ſufficiently tell us how we ought to behave our ſelves towards our biteereſt adverſaries. We ſee then what a Spirit we ſhall have wrought in us by a right remembranc of our dying Saviour, not only towards our friends but our Enemies themſelves. As for that love that ought to be amongſt all true Chriſtians, we find this is the new command, that he hath inculcated upon us, and obliged us to by the great example of his unparallel'd love, that we alſo ſhould love one another, *Joh.* 15. 12, 13. 1 *Joh.* 3. 16. And this he hath made the very Badge of his true Diſciples, whereby they ſhould be known from the reſt of the world, *Joh.* 13, 34, 35. And one particular end of our meeting together

gether at the Lord's Table, is to testifie and strengthen our mutual love. This we shew by our eating and drinking together, which is the custom of Friends: and this is one reason why this Sacrament is called the *Communion*, in that Christians have here the most endearing fellowship with each other. For hereby is not only represented their union with Christ their Head, and their spiritual communion with him, but that nearness of relation they have amongst themselves, being mystically united into one Body, whereof Christ is the Head, 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. *For we being many are one bread, and one body: For we are all partakers of that one bread.* Each Christian is so related to, and joyned with the other, that they go to the making up of one Body, as the several Grains compacted together make one Bread; and by their joynt participation of this one Bread, they declare themselves to be but one Body, the Children of one Father, living in one Family, and feeding at the same Table, upon the very same food, even upon Christ himself, who is the *true bread that came down from Heaven*; and upon their being united to Christ as Head, is founded this their so near and intimate relation to each other, to be Fellow Members of the same Body; as they that have the same Sovereign are Fellow-subjects, they that have the same Parents are Brethren: And by their feeding on this Sacramental food, and Christ himself therein, *from whom the whole body being fitly joyned together makes increase, unto the edifying of it self in love*, Eph. 4. 15, 16. Having here a communion with him, which fills and acts them with the same Spirit; hereby, I say, they receive a farther bond and disposition to the greatest unity of hearts and affections. So that we are especially engaged before our attendance upon this Ordinance, *to go our way, and be reconciled to our Brother. The leven of malice*, amongst all other wickedness, is to be *purged out, when we keep this Feast*, 1 *Cor* 5. 7, 8. And indeed we shall find this the general sense of people, that they ought to be in charity with their neighbours before they come to the Sacrament, whilst they discover too little sense of the necessity of other Graces that are equally needful; yea, whilst they remain destitute of this very charity it self, which they acknowledge to be so necessary: for, alas! they are not so easily brought to the practice of their duty as to acknowledge and commend it. For the plain truth

truth is, none can rise up to this excellent temper of Spirit, wherein one half of our Religion consists, but he who is ingrafted into Christ, and transformed into his likeness by the Spirit of love, which may direct those who are yet void hereof, what course to take for the attainment of the same, namely, to get united to Christ by a living faith and fervent love, whereby they shall find kindled in their breasts a new affection to all that do with them love the Lord Jesus. For certainly it is not enough for us that we have no malice in our hearts against any, nor wish them any hurt; this is a poor description of Christian charity, and may be found in a *Turk* or *Jew*, but there ought to be in us, besides a general love to all mankind, which makes us desirous of their good, a peculiar tender love to all Christ's faithful servants, which causeth us to take delight in them, as such in whom we behold the image of God shining forth in their holy conversations, and begets in us unfeigned desires for their good both of Soul and Body, and makes us willing to contribute our assistance thereto, according to our ability and their necessities, inward or outward, and inclines us to rejoyce in their good in some measure as if it was our own; and hereby our hearts are so knit to them, that we hold greatest familiarity with them, and take pleasure in their society and conference, and more especially in joyning with them in the worship and service of God. This is a most sweet affection, and the exercise of it is exceeding pleasant to a gracious Soul: Which, was it more common in the world, would reform it from a Wilderness into a kind of Paradice; and the perfection of it, will be one great part of our future happiness. But this true Christian love can dwell in none but such in whom God dwells, who is love. Only they who are recovered out of the selfish' carnal state, and are brought home to God by Jesus Christ, are the men that are capable of this sincere love to their brethren, for which many clear reasons might be given, was it needful and pertinent. But this may suffice for all, that this affection is grounded upon, and follows our spiritual relation, and therefore a man must first be in Christ himself, before he can love another purely as his brother in Christ, as a fellow-member of the same body. He that hath not submitted himself to his Prince, cannot love another upon account of his being a fellow-subject with him to the same

ſame Sovereign: And hence it is we find this given in as a character of our regeneration, 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. *Hereby we know we are paſt from death to life, becauſe we love the brethren.* Moſt certain it is, that they who find not in themſelves a love to any people in the world upon account of their being made like to God in holineſs, are deſtitute of true love to God himſelf. Wherefore I would adviſe you to try your ſelves by this note, look into your own hearts, and look abroad amongſt thoſe you hold your deareſt friends, and examine what it is that draws out your love towards them. Are they therefore dear to you, becauſe they appear to you to be lovers of God, and ſuch as have a great Zeal for his Glory, becauſe they are of pious exemplary lives, and therefore (ſo far as you can diſcern) of gracious ſpirits? Do you love them as thoſe that are bought with the ſame blood, and ſanctified by the ſame ſpirit with your ſelves? As ſuch who are helpful to your Souls, or receive help from you, and walk in the ſame holy way, and with whom you hope to live for ever in the ſame Glory? Or is not all your affection founded upon carnal reaſons, and beſtowed only upon your kindred, or ſuch that have done you courteſies in worldly matters; but as for the reſt, you ſee no reaſon, why you ſhould love one more than another. Nay farther, do you not find your hearts ſecretly riſe againſt ſuch holy perſons, as I before mentioned, ſo that you had rather be in any company than theirs, and could even wiſh the world rid of them, becauſe their blameleſs lives do condemn and ſhame yours; and ſometimes their loving admonitions check and diſturb you, as *Lot* was a trouble to the *Sodomites*? Are you not ſo far from a reverend eſteem of Godlineſs, that you can rather ſcoff at it, though perhaps under other names, and are prone to think it nothing elſe but fancy and folly to be ſo ſhy of ſin, and ſo extream careful to pleaſe God? If it be thus, for certain you are no better than haters of God himſelf, as he is holy and juſt, though it may be you think not ſo much by your ſelves. He that loves the Father will love the Child alſo, ſo far as he's like him; he that loves the perſon will love his picture, *He that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* 1 Joh. 4. 20. Wherefore ſeek to get your hearts deeply affected with the Glories and Excellencies of the bleſſed God, and

you

you will find your ſelves carried out to a great eſteem of any ſhadows and reſemblances of thoſe in his people. Let Chriſt be once the chiefeſt of ten thouſands to your Souls, altogether lovely and deſirable, and then you will count thoſe in whom he hath copied out himſelf, and ſhed abroad his own Spirit, to be the *only excellent ones upon earth*, in whom you will take great delight. You will then ſo fall in love with his Image wherever you diſcern it, that in compariſon thereof you will even diſdain all thoſe worldly excellencies, which do ſo dazel the eyes of ſhort-ſighted, mean-ſpirited ones. That humility, purity reverence of the divine Majeſty, gentleneſs, goodneſs, and all other fruits of the Spirit, which diſplay themſelves in the behaviour of the truly ſanctified, will make them appear more honourable in your eyes, and render them far more dear to you than thoſe, who have nothing to commend them to your eſteem, but that they have great eſtates, wear brave cloaths, and have high titles conferred upon them: Though you muſt not be wanting in thoſe reſpects that are due to outward greatneſs, yet if you be Chriſtians of a right ſtamp, you will be ſuch as *David* mentions, when he deſcribes a Citizen of *Zion*, Pſal. 15. 4. *One in whoſe eyes a vile perſon is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.* Yea farther, you will ſee more reaſon for your love to thoſe that are holy, than to your brethren or neareſt kindred in the fleſh, or than to thoſe that are only of the ſame opinions and principles that you your ſelves are of, which do lamentably confine and regulate, the affections of the moſt. But the right Chriſtian temper is far more generous and large; for being derived from the bowels of Chriſt, it begets the ſame diſpoſition in the Souls wherein it dwells, according to their capacity, that is in Chriſt himſelf. And therefore they that hate none, they envy none: As for the wicked miſerable ones, they pity, and even mourn over them, as we find Chriſt did, and with patience and meekneſs are ready to give them all the help they can, to bring them out of their uncomfortable dangerous eſtates; but all whom they have reaſon to believe Chriſt loves, that walk as he hath enjoyned all his friends to do, theſe they dearly love: And ſuch errors or infirmities, which will not cauſe Chriſt to withdraw his favour from them, will not take off their affections; for they dare not pretend to a greater ſtrictneſs

than

than their Lord, leſt what they might call *pure zeal* for him, ſhould be found *pure ſelfiſhneſs*. And therefore they dare not make their own private apprehenſions, which they find not in the Creed, nor in the Goſpel, the ſtandard and meaſure of ſuch as muſt paſs for godly, and be thought worthy their regard and eſteem, which is the conſtant note of one addicted to a party: But, I ſay, they would have their friendſhip as large as their Lord and Maſters, ſince 'tis for his ſake that they have any friends at all, ſuch is the affection which God's Spirit works in his people, and with which they are poſſeſs'd ſo far as they are fram'd and moulded by his Spirit.

But moreover, the charity requiſite in Communicants, conſiſts not only in a cordial love to the Godly, whom they are to reckon upon as deareſt friends, but alſo in *forgiveneſs of injuries to all that are their enemies*, and have done or endeavoured to do them wrong: Which temper is of flat neceſſity to all that would come worthily to this Ordinance. Hither men come expecting a pardon; and can he look for a pardon of his many and hainous ſins from the great God of heaven and earth, who will not forgive ſome ſmall offence that he may have received from his fellow-creature? Small, I ſay, for the greateſt injury that can be done us by another is exceeding ſmall, and not worthy our notice ſo far as we our ſelves only are concerned therein. Selfiſh men will never believe this, but it's a certain truth, and ſo plain, that many ſober heathens do with great earneſtneſs inculcate it. Alas what can they do but a little hinder our thriving in the world, or deny us that reſpect we ſhould have by their careleſs carriage, or ſpeak meanly or falſly of us to leſſen our credit? Such like trifles as theſe are the worſt that we ſhall ordinarily meet with from our bittereſt enemies. And are theſe ſuch inſufferable injuries, that by all means we muſt ſeek to be revenged? Surely, ſuch a wicked ſpirit cannot enter into the breaſt of a Chriſtian, that remembers what he hath done againſt God, and yet what he expects from him, and what he hath already received.

And indeed there is nothing more likely to bring us to the performance of this duty to our brother, than the ſerious conſideration of the infinite mercy God hath ſhewn to us in ſending his Son, and freely tendring forgiveneſs through him. This we find preſs'd upon us *Eph.* 4. 32.

And

And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you; Col. 3. 13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: If any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* And to engage us the more, our forgiving of others is made a condition of being forgiven our selves, *Math.* 6. 14, 15. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* How hard-hearted must that servant be, who, when his Lord hath forgiven him ten thousand talents, takes his brother by the throat, and casts him into prison for an hundred pence? How just is it that all the former debt should be charged by his Lord upon such a Servant? as you may find in a parable at large, *Matth.* 18. from 23 to the end, where, after Christ had told, how terribly that unthankful cruel Servant was dealt with, he adds ver. last, *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* To love God above all, and our neighbour as our selves, are the *two great commandments, whereon depend the Law and the Prophets*, and which comprehend all our duty: and to both of these we have the greatest help and strongest obligation by the Death of Christ that ever could be thought on. Shall we not love him that hath thus loved us? And shall we not shew pity and compassion to others, who have received so much our selves? Yea, who shall be shut out from mercy if we be unmerciful? No spirit in the world is so contrary to the Gospel as that of malice and revenge, and retaining a secret enmity and spight against any person whatever. As thou would'st escape the society and portion of Devils hereafter, beware how thou now entertainest this Devilish nature, than which nothing is more frequently forbidden in the Gospel, and nothing more flatly edjoyned than the contrary temper, *Gal.* 5. 20. *Now the fruits of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication,* &c. *hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders*: ver. 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,* &c. *Col.* 3. 8. *But now ye also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy,* &c. *v.* 12. 13. *Put on there-*

ſave (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercy, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering. When the Apoſtle *Paul* wrote to the *Corinthians* to rectifie the diſorders they were guilty of, in reference to the Lord's Supper, the firſt thing he falls upon, is the Diviſions that were amongſt them, 1 *Cor.* 11. 18. that compoſedneſs of Soul, that humility, ſelf-abaſement, and humble dependance upon free mercy, which are ſo abſolutely neceſſary for him that would profit by this Ordinance, do all call for a quiet, charitable frame of Spirit towards our Brethren, when we betake our ſelves thereto.

And thus (by Gods aſſiſtance) have I in ſome meaſure ſhewn, from the nature and deſign of this Ordinance (which is to keep up the remembrance of Chriſt) how thoſe perſons muſt be qualified who can duly attend thereupon. To repeat their deſcription once again: They who are furniſh'd with the neceſſary fundamental truths of Chriſtian Religion, and do believe them to be indeed truths, being ſo verily perſwaded that Chriſt is the Saviour of the World, that they heartily conſent to take him for their Saviour, and therefore being humbled for, and reſolved preſently to turn from all their evil ways, do humbly expect (or at leaſt earneſtly deſire) the pardon of their ſins from the mercy of God for his ſake, and are truly willing to have their hearts ſanctified by the ſpirit of God, given out through him, that they may lead an holy life; and do depend upon him to bring them to everlaſting Glory in the enjoyment of God, upon whom they have ſet their deareſt love, and chuſe him as their only portion, being ſincerely thankful for the manifeſtations of his wonderful love in Chriſt, and by the power of his love are in charity with all men, forgiving their enemies, and having a peculiar affection to the members of Chriſt: Theſe, and only theſe are fit to partake of the Lord's Supper. Wherefore I intreat thee, whoever thou art, that would'ſt not wilfully delude thy own Soul, and ruſh upon this duty to thy hurt, take thy ſelf to task, and examine well whether thou art ſuch a one as I have here deſcribed: Yea, if thou haſt any deſire to eſcape everlaſting miſery, and be received into Heaven when thou dieſt, examine thy ſelf; for except thou beeſt or becomeſt ſuch a one, as ſure as God is true, thou art never like to be ſaved.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

An invitation to come to Christ and his Sacrament, with motives thereto.

Use. MY next work is now to call upon and exhort all, thus to examine and prepare themselves, and so to come and eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup. Ho! All you that have any love to the blessed Jesus, who loved you to the shedding of his warmest hearts-blood for your sakes, come hither and *shew forth his death till he come.* If Christ be precious to you, let his memory be precious, and be you careful to preserve it by your due and frequent attendance upon this Ordinance, set up on purpose for the Remembrance of him. All you whose eyes have been opened to discern the vileness of your natures and conversations, come hither, and give a kindly vent to your Sorrow, beholding sin at the worst, in those wounds that it gave to your dearest Saviour. All you that are indeed convinced that Christ is the true Messiah, com'n forth from God to give life to the World, and are resolved to hearken to him that your Souls may live, come hither, and before God, Angels, and Men, profess these Resolutions, and bind your selves over to him, to be his Disciples and most obedient Servants. Be not asham'd of the Cross of Christ, but avow it before all the World, that your hope of happiness is placed only in that *Jesus, who was slain and hanged on a Tree*, but is risen again and ascended into the Heavens; hereby own that you are Christians, let others be what they will. Come hither all you that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and feed upon him, who here conveys of himself to the empty longing Soul, and satisfies his people with good things suitable to their wants. Come hither poor dejected drooping Soul, that dost unfeignedly love thy Lord, but art afraid thou shalt never obtain his favour; come and see what he hath done to assure thee of the reality, the freeness and fulness of his love; Come and taste the provisions he hath made for thy comfort, and rejoyce in the sense of his bounty. All you that expect shortly to look your Redeemer in the face, come hither and behold him, where till then,

you may moſt clearly diſcern him. Here ſtamp his image firmly upon your minds, that he may live in your breaſts, though for a while he is out of your ſight, that, till you ſhall ſee him, you may never be forgetful of him. Come hither young ones, and betimes liſt your ſelves under Chriſt your Leader, here *Remember your Creator* and Redeemer *in the days of your youth!* Come hither ye aged that have ſtood idle in the Market-place till the eleventh hour of the day, now at length hire your ſelves under the Lord of the Vineyard, to be more induſtrious in his ſervice for the hour that is behind. Come hither ye Poor, and partake of a Feaſt that ſhall coſt you nothing. Come hither ye Rich, to a Feaſt more precious and coſtly than ever you were at, which coſt the Maſter thereof his own life to provide it. Come hither, ye Maſters, and promiſe to become the Servants of Chriſt. Come hither ye Servants, and by taking Chriſt for your Lord become his Freemen. Yea, all you that have been the moſt eſtranged from God, and greateſt deſpiſers of Chriſt, yet now at length if you will come in, acknowledging the folly of your former ways, proteſting againſt any longer continuance therein, humbly imploring mercy and acceptance from God through his Son, even you are invited hither, to teſtifie the truth of your return to him, and to receive the pardon that is ready for you. Behold, *Wiſdom hath builded her houſe, and furniſh'd her table*, and calls to all *to eat of her Bread, and drink of her Wine that ſhe hath mingled*; to all that are fully determined to *forſake the fooliſh, and go in the way of underſtanding*. Hearken you fooliſh prodigals, whoſe Souls are out of taſte with all ſolid food, though you are feeding upon the luſcious delights of ſin and the creature, which yet have only deluded, never ſatisfied you: Caſt away theſe empty huſks, and come to a plenteous Feaſt here made ready, wherein you will acknowledge there is ſweetneſs and fulneſs, if your diſtempers be cured, and your appetite and reliſh changed. So large is the commiſſion which Chriſt hath granted, that in his name I dare confidently invite all, whoever they are, or whatever they have been, even the moſt prophane and ſenſual, drunkards and whoremongers, the proud and covetous, if now at laſt you will be perſwaded to bid an everlaſting farewel to all your ways of wickedneſs, and for the time to come walk in the

the holy path, ſee that you are ſincere, and you may come boldly to the Sacrament, there to manifeſt and confirm theſe purpoſes. If at length you are weary of that miſerable drudgery, wherein the enemy and tormentor of mankind, the Devil, hath employed you, labouring to keep you in bondage to ſin, than which there is not a more loathſome ſtinking Dungeon, more intollerable chains in all the World; if, I ſay, you would fain be delivered from this ſlavery, and will *take on you Chriſt's eaſie yoke, that you may find reſt for your ſouls*, come hither and enter your ſelves into his Service, engaging to be ſubject to him all the days of your life. In a word, all you that have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt, and underſtanding what that ſignifies do conſent to the obligations thereby laid upon you, come to the Lord's Supper, and manifeſt this conſent, and renew this Covenant to be the Lords.

Some conſiderations I ſhall lay before you, to quicken you to the performance of this weighty duty, which I propoſe not ſo much to thoſe who are already prepared, that they would come to this Feaſt; but rather to all indifferently, that they would prepare themſelves, and come away without any longer delay.

1. To that end, firſt conſider, *this is the expreſs command of Chriſt*, as you may find at his firſt inſtitution of this Sacrament before mentioned, *Luke*, 22. 19. *This do in remembrance of me.* And to whom was this command given do you think? Only to the Apoſtles; or in them to all Chriſtians? What reaſon can be given why it ſhould be peculiar to them, and not common to others? They were look'd upon, and ſpoke to here, as Diſciples, and therefore all Chriſt's Diſciples are concerned therein. And you cannot think this was an injunction that had reference to that time only; the very phraſe, *Remembrance*, ſpeaks the contrary: For this implies ſomething that's paſt, or abſent; which ſhews they were to do this after the Death of Chriſt ſhould be paſt, and aſcended from them into Heaven, in remembrance of him and his Death. But to put the matter paſt doubt, we have the practice of the Apoſtles after Chriſt's Death and Aſcenſion, telling us how they underſtood this command: And I hope we ſhall find none ſo impudent, as to ſay they miſunderſtood it. Now though it was always wont to be account-

ed profaneneſs, to violate the commands of Chriſt, yet there are a ſort of men in the world, that would make it a piece of religion forſooth to contemn this his injunction, and their diſobedience to his Law muſt paſs for a ſign of their perfection. But if they ſtand condemned by all impartial men, who, not only in name, but in deed, would bring more Sacraments into the Church than Chriſt hath done, giving the ſame honour to, and pleading for the ſame efficacy and neceſſity of their inventions as of Chriſt's own inſtitutions, wherein the *Papiſts* are groſly guilty: What do they better, who would caſt forth of the Church thoſe Sacraments which our Lord hath ordained, as if they were uſeleſs unneceſſary things, which is the doctrine of our *Quakers*? If there was nothing elſe to be ſaid in anſwer to the unreaſonable pretences of theſe men, is it not enough that we have a plain command of Chriſts to oppoſe to their Fancy? He ſaith to all his followers, *Do this*, and they ſay, *Do it not*: Which ſhould we rather hearken to? And hereby judge what ſpirit that is, which riſeth up in ſuch flat contradiction to the voice of Chriſt? But farther, can they or any man elſe ſhew, that this command is founded upon ſuch reaſons, as makes it of leſs force and obligation to us, than to thoſe whom it was firſt given to? Do not all the grounds of this duty which were then, ſtill remain the ſame? As I ſhall ſhew more afterward. Wherefore let them either ſhew where Chriſt hath repealed the precept which he once gave, or let them beware of falling under the *woe* denounced againſt ſuch, *as not only break his commands, but teach others ſo to do.*

And little leſs guilty than theſe are they, who, though they will grant Chriſt's command in force, yet give not obedience to it; and though they will not ſay this Sacrament is unprofitable, yet by their neglect receive no profit from it. All you that have bin long ſince at years of diſcretion, and have had frequent opportunities to come to the Lord's Table, and yet have not cared to inform your ſelves, what it is you ſhould do there, what good you ſhould get by it, and ſo have taken no care to make preparations for this duty, but from year to year have neglected it; what think you of this courſe, I beſeech you? Stay a while and reflect upon it. Did you never hear of a command given by the Lord Jeſus, that all true Chriſtians

ans ſhould meet together at this Supper, and there in remembrance that his body was broken, and his blood ſhed for them, eat Bread, and drink Wine, ſet apart for that purpoſe? Hath he given a command to this purpoſe, or not? That it was ſpoken to the Apoſtles, I have told you, hinders not, but that it belongs as well to you, ſince if you be ſincere Chriſtians as they were, you have the ſame cauſe to do this that they had. When Chriſt bids them deny themſelves, love one another, and pray to the Father in his name; do not theſe precepts reach you and I, as well as thoſe particular perſons to whom he ſpake them? And tell me if you can, why the caſe is not the ſame, as to that command of his, which I have even now mentioned, that we ſhould *Do this*, receive this Sacrament of his Supper, *in remembrance of him*? He that hath commanded you to mortifie your luſts, to love God above all, he it is hath enjoyned you to do this; and if you think he ought to be obeyed in one thing, why not in all? So then ſince you cannot but grant, that ſuch a command there is, what can you ſay for your ſelves who have diſobeyed it? are you not hereby guilty of contemning the Authority of the Lawgiver? what ſay you? Do you think you have herein behaved your ſelves as you ought? Can you imagine, that this your negligence and diſobedience is acceptable to the Lord Jeſus? Or do you not care whether it is or not? I hope it is not all one with you to pleaſe or to provoke him. Does not then your Conſciences by this time ſmite you for your careleſneſs? If not, I doubt it is feared, and ſenſeleſs; if it does, then let me ask you what you intend for the time to come? Will you hold on that courſe which you dare not juſtifie, which your own Conſcience condemns you for? Dare you ſtill perſiſt in the breach of a known Law? Have you any thing to ſay againſt the Law it ſelf, or againſt him that made it? Is it not the Law of Chriſt the Son of God, your Redeemer? And hath not he power to enjoyn you what he pleaſeth? Hath not he right to govern you upon account of his Redeeming you? And are not all things delivered into his hands by the Father? Yea, does not the Father himſelf ſpeak to you in and by him? Does not he himſelf tell us, that the words which he ſpoke were the Fathers that ſent him? *Joh.* 14. 10. and 24. Can you then gainſay Chriſt's Authority? If

not, how dare you reſiſt it? Do you indeed take him for your Lord, or not? Anſwer me one way or other. If you do not, then call your ſelves no longer Chriſtians: for this your ſubjection is eſſential to your Chriſtianity, as I have before ſhewed. If you do, then pray tell me, how can this conſiſt with wilful violation of plain precepts? Do you take him for your Maſter, if you will yield him no reverence nor fear? Will you not be as ſubject to your Lord as the *Centurion's* ſervants were to him? to whom if he ſaid but *do this*, they did it. Let this be the tryal whether you will or not: Behold Chriſt ſaith to thee in the Goſpel, and now in his name, and with power from him, I charge thee, *Do this*, come and and partake of his Supper which he hath prepared for his friends and followers. Here is now a *Do this*: Wilt thou obey it or not? If thou wilt not, conſider well, whether Chriſt be like to reckon thee among his faithful Servants at laſt; and what thou would'ſt think of a Servant of thy own that ſhould carry himſelf thus towards thee. What thy uſual ſhifts and evaſions are, I ſhall take notice anon and give thee an anſwer. Only at preſent let me make haſt to intreat thee not to miſtake me, and deceive thy ſelf, as if I was thus earneſt and importunate with thee for nothing elſe, but to go with thy neighbours ſometimes when a Sacrament is adminiſtred, and there take a bit of Bread, and a ſup of Wine, with a little ſeeming reverence, without any due conſideration before or after to what purpoſe it is. Canſt thou be ſo ſilly as to imagine, thou haſt ſatisfied the will of Chriſt when thou haſt done this? Or canſt thou think thy Soul ever the better for it? Wherefore remember what it was I firſt exhorted thee to, namely to *examine* and prepare thy ſelfe and *ſo to eat of this bread, and drink of this Cup*; to repent of, and ſet thy ſelf againſt all ſin, and to devote thy ſelf to Chriſt, and then to take the Sacrament as a teſtimony that thou doſt ſo, and as a bond to oblige thee firmer to him. This I have frequently told thee; that thou mayſt be ſure to underſtand my meaning, and remember it, take it once again in this plain compariſon; if a Maſter was about to bargain with one to be his Servant, offering ſo much wages, and a Shilling in earneſt; and another that ſtands by, having a mind to drive on the bargain, ſhould perſwade the Servant not to ſtand off, but to take his earneſt; do you not know what he meant by this? Do you think he

be wisht the man only to take the Shilling and go his way without any more ado? Surely no, but to agree with him to become his Servant, to do the work he should appoint him, and to shew his consent to this, should take the Shilling that was to be given in earnest. Thus, Reader, being earnestly desirous to drive on a match betwixt Christ and thy Soul, I would fain beg thee to take the Sacrament, as an evidence of thy consent to become his faithful servant; but upon no other terms I'll assure thee. Wherefore if thou be resolved against the diligent service of God, and yet venturest upon this Ordinance, let the blame be upon thy own head. Do not think to excuse thy self by saying, thou read'st a Book that told thee it was Christ's command to all, that they should receive the Sacrament, and that therefore thou didst as thou wast instructed: For again and again have I made known to thee, that none ought to do thus but true Christians, such as believe in, love and obey the Lord Jesus, and this is that to which thou art implicitly urged by that very command which he hath given for the frequenting his Supper.

And this I would press upon all that perform this duty rudely and negligently, as well as on those that altogether omit it. Let not such careless ones imagine they have hitherto render'd due Obedience to this command. For consider, when a Duty is enjoyned, all that is necessary in order thereto is thereby enjoyned, and the right manner of performing it also. Thus when we are commanded to pray to God, by that very command we are engaged to get the knowledge of God, and to believe that he can hear and help us, and also to be reverent and serious in our prayers: For without these and the like Qualifications, we may say over-many words, but we cannot properly be said to *pray*. Thus when Christ commands us to eat Bread, and drink Wine in remembrance of him, he hereby commands us to get our hearts into such a frame, that we may be fit and able to remember him with those affections, and in that manner that it beseems ransomed men to remember their Redeemer. And therefore we must know him, and be sensible of our own slavery, and be willing to be Redeemed by him, and be thankful for his Love, with the other Qualifications which I have before shewn to be necessary to, and included in our remembrance of him. If you make a Feast on purpose to entertain a

Friend

Friend, you thereby ſuppoſe not only that he ſhould come to your Table, but that he ſhould come with a ſtomach to eat of your Proviſions. And when Chriſt invites men to his Table, where he hath provided ſpiritual Food under the outward Elements, do you not think he requires all that come, that they ſhould have an Appetite to, and deſire after what he hath provided for them? Thus then have I laid open to you the flat command of Chriſt, whereby you are required to put your ſelves in a right poſture, and come to this Feaſt which he hath ordained in his Church, as a Memorial of the Redemption he wrought for it. Whether you will obey it or not I cannot tell, I leave that to your choice; if you have any reaſon that ſeems ſtronger than the will of Chriſt, do as you ſhall think fit; only remember the Command I have been urging upon you, was given you by that Jeſus who will be your Judge, and whoſe ſentence will paſs according to that word, whereof this command is a part; and if you think you have got any ſuch excuſe, as will bring you off clear at that day, though you be found guilty of contemning his Law, I have no more to ſay, but at your own peril be it: Here I have given you faithful warning.

Here I may farther add, that you have not only Chriſt's command, but the *example of his Apoſtles, Diſciples, and the Primitive Chriſtians* to engage you to this Duty, wherein they were all conſciencious and frequent, *Acts* 2. 42. They that were converted by the preaching of the Apoſtles *continued ſtedfaſtly in their doctrine and fellowſhip, in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* And this you may find was the practice of the Church of *Corinth* (and by conſequence of all other Churches then planted) in that the Apoſtle rectifies the abuſes they were guilty of therein, as you may find at large, 1 *Cor.* 11. 17. to the end. And are not we to *walk as we have theſe for an example*, and to be *followers of them as they are of Chriſt?* Moreover, they that are skill'd in Church-Hiſtory tell us, that it is moſt certain, it was the cuſtom of the Primitive Chriſtians, uſually to celebrate this Sacrament every Lords-day at leaſt. And by the way take notice, though we have no particular precept in Scripture how frequently we ought to do it, yet from thence we are taught, that it ought to be done more than once; and the practice of thoſe who beſt knew the mind of Chriſt may inform us, that it ought to be done often; though the particular

cular times are left to the prudence of Church-governours.

2. In the next place I would wish you well to consider, whether you have not good reason to conclude, *that you shall receive much advantage from the performance of that duty, which is recommended to you by the express command of Christ, and the example of his first followers.* Was there nothing else to be shewed but a command from him, whom you acknowledge your Sovereign, one would think it enough to silence all objections, and bring you to obedience. But do you not moreover believe, that Christ designed the good of his Servants by the institution of this Sacrament in his Church? Are any of his Commands grievous or unprofitable? Is not the whole design of Christian Religion evidently for our interest, if we believe we have immortal souls? And can you imagine this one duty to be an exception from all the rest? as having nothing in it which may make it worthy our performance. Hath not he backt his Commands with promises, that we might have all kind of encouragement to his Service? Hath not he told us, that to those *who keep his commandments he will manifest himself*? Do you think then, that when Christ first set up this Sacrament, he hereby intended any advantage to those who should celebrate it? If not, he appointed them a mere piece of drudgery, in some respect worse than the Jewish Ceremonies (for they had their use to the Spiritual) and even as bad as those burthensome ridiculous Ceremonies, which make up so great a part of the Popish Religion; but if you dare not affirm this, then I would know, whether the same advantages do not still continue to this Ordinance, which were first intended to be communicated by it to the worthy Receiver? Again, did the Apostles and their companions get any good by it, think you? If not, it's strange they should be so exact and frequent in it; if they did, fain would I know why the same good is not still to be got by serious diligent Christians. Certainly God's treasures of Grace are not spent, his fountain is not drawn dry, nor never will be. He that will be the everlasting portion of his People, when this World is ended, hath enough sure in himself for the supply of all their necessities, whilst they are travelling through the World. When millions of Saints have received that Grace which leads them to Glory, there is not a jot the

less

leſs for thoſe that come after. And as his Graces are not exhauſted, ſo neither is the way of giving them forth changed; in the ſame manner that his Spirit accompanied the Word and Sacraments, at any time ſince the Goſpel was publiſh'd, in the ſame manner it accompanies them ſtill, for ought that any man living can ſhew to the contrary. *Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.* He who will be with his Miniſters till the end of the World, will be with his Ordinances till then, and with his people in the conſcientious uſe of them. Why ſhould the firſt Chriſtians be tied to that which we in after-ages may neglect? Is not our caſe the ſame with theirs? Are not our neceſſities as great? And may not our profitings alſo, if the fault be not our own? To proſecute this a little farther, as I promiſed. Is not the Death of Chriſt as great a mercy to us in theſe latter days of his Church, as it was to them in the firſt? Have not we the ſame pardon offered to us, the ſame promiſes given, the ſame Heaven prepared, and the ſame ſanctifying Spirit to bring us thereto? Have we not then the ſame cauſe to be frequently mindful of, and thankful for theſe mercies, and the Death that purchas'd them, in all ways preſcribed to that purpoſe? Are not we ſtill of the ſame nature that men were then? Such whoſe affections are moſt raiſed and quickened by ſenſible things, by the help whereof we can with greater clearneſs and power conceive of things ſpiritual, and can more affectionately remember what's paſt, when we ſee it repreſented and acted afreſh before our eyes. Is it not therefore our wiſdom and duty to accept of ſuch aſſiſtances as our Lord himſelf, in his care of us, hath afforded? Whereof, the Sacrament of his Supper is a principal one, every way fitted for that end. Were they more dull than we, that they ſhould need ſuch quickning means which we judg our ſelves paſt the uſe of? Had not we as much need as they to be frequently renewing our more ſolemn repentance for ſin, and covenantings with God, that ſo the conſideration of thoſe renewed engagements we lye under, may the more over-power us to faithfulneſs and preſeverance in his ſervice? Are not our wants of Grace as great as theirs: And therefore ought we not to wait in all thoſe ways whereby theſe wants may be ſupplied, which are the ſame now as formerly? Is it not as rich a mercy now as ever, to

have

have all the bleſſings and priviledges of the Covenant of Grace, whether temporal, ſpiritual, or eternal, not only repreſented, but made over and aſſured to us, in ſuch a familiar manner? Is not the exerciſe and ſtrengthening of mutual brotherly love, by the maintaining of the moſt endearing Chriſtian communion, ſtill a moſt pleaſant and profitable duty? Now eſpecially, when all men have learnt to cry out, how cold Charity is grown? Thus you ſee there are very many, and thoſe no ſmall advantages that accrue to ſuch as carefully manage this weighty duty, and all of them continue ſtill the ſame that they were in the time of the Apoſtles. And let there be any other ground of their practice aſſigned, or any other benefit which they hereby enjoyed, and I queſtion not to prove, that we have the ſame, or the like grounds, and are capable of the ſame benefits with them. Thus have I ſhewn you, that to come in a due manner to the Lord's Table is both your duty and your intereſt; there is a command given by your Lord, obliging you to what is good for your ſelves, (and indeed ſo do all other his commands if well weighed.) And what more can be ſaid to work upon men that have any conſcience, or any ſelf-love, to give obedience? Wherefore if you be Chriſtians, yea, if you be men; if you have any ſenſe of God's authority, or of your own neceſſities, make all poſſible haſt out of that dangerous woful eſtate which makes you unfit for, and unwilling to this ſo profitable a duty; and your Souls being made ready, let them bring your bodies hither. Having been larger in theſe, I ſhall be brief in thoſe that follow.

3. It is much to be feared that *whilſt you ſlight the Sacrament, you ſlight thoſe bleſſings which hereby are repreſented, and aſſured to Believers.* You your ſelves would judge by others in caſes like this. If the King ſhould proclaim, that he will give Eſtates in ſome of his Plantations to all that will come to the Court, and take Patents from him, and ſubſcribe their Names to a Bond, which only ties them to acknowledge they had their Eſtates from his bounty, and to live there according to his Laws: Is it not a ſign, that they who will not do thus much, do very little care for the Eſtates that are offered them? And do not they manifeſt as little regard of Heaven it ſelf, and all the promiſes of the Goſpel, who are loath to be at ſo much

much pains, as to go to the Sacrament, there to have all theſe confirmed to them? being unwilling to bind themſelves hereby to thankfulneſs and obedience to that God, who makes them ſuch large and bounteous offers. He that refuſeth a cheap and eaſie Medicine, which being duly taken may recover him from his ſickneſs, may well be ſaid to undervalue his health. Thus it is too apparent, that thou little regardeſt the health of thy Soul, whilſt thou ſligheſt thoſe means, which, through the bleſſing of the great Phyſician upon the careful uſe of them, might tend ſo much to thy healing and ſtrengthening. If a Shilling be offered me in earneſt of a thouſand Pound to be given upon ſome certain conditions, if I refuſe to take it, it is not ſo much the Earneſt as the greater Sum that I thereby reject. Thus Heaven is aſſured to thee upon condition of thy faith and obedience, and if thou likeſt it upon theſe terms, the Sacrament ſhall be given thee in Earneſt; but if thou wilt not take the Earneſt thou ſeem'ſt to put away from thee everlaſting life. If a condemned man tear in pieces the King's Pardon which is brought to him, his fault is not ſo much the tearing of a piece of Paper, as his contempt of the Pardon. Thus ſhall it be laid to thy charge, not meerly the deſpiſing a bit of Bread and a ſup of Wine, but thy ſlighting all thoſe rich and unvaluable bleſſings which hereby were offered and aſſured to Believers. If indeed thou prizeſt theſe, ſhew it by thy ſetting a due eſteem upon that which hath ſo near a relation to them; but if thou value them not, think not much if thou go without them for ever: For whom canſt thou blame, if thou miſs of theſe things, which thou careſt not for?

4. *Is not this neglect a ſad ſign, that thou performeſt no duty as thou oughteſt, nor to thoſe ends thou ſhouldeſt?* For if thou di'dſt rightly improve any, why ſhould'ſt thou not be glad of all? Art thou not ready to try all courſes, and uſe all means for the continuance and increaſe of thy outward welfare? And yet thou thinkeſt every thing too much that's enjoyned thee for thy Spirirtual advantage, and therefore comeſt not to this Ordinance, as thinking thou mayſt do well enough without it. They that are in health uſe not to ſay, if they have one ſort of food, what ſhall they do with another? Or if they eat one Meal in a day, why need they eat another? and yet this is thy language in reference to thy Soul. So long as thou haſt been baptiz-

ed

ed, and comeſt to Church, and ſay'ſt thy Prayers (and it's well if thou do thus much) why may not this ſerve thy turn without coming to the Sacrament? Why tell me, pray thee, what's thy deſign in theſe duties? Is it to get good to thy Soul? That thou mayſt grow in Grace, and get fitter for Glory? If it be, why then is not every duty acceptable to thee, which would help on this deſign? But is it not rather to be fear'd, that theſe are done out of cuſtom without expecting, and therefore without finding any great advantage from them? and becauſe the neglect of that duty I am urging thee to, is too common, and ſo no great matter of diſgrace, therefore thou makeſt ſo light of it. And withall, perhaps there is ſomewhat more pains requiſite to prepare thee for it, and therefore out of meer ſloth and lazineſs thou holdeſt off. Oh that thou waſt but ſet in as good earneſt, to enrich thy Soul with Grace, as the moſt of men, and its like thou thy ſelf art, to grow rich in the World! How many ways will they wind and turn to get a little Gain? If one courſe will not ſerve they'll take another, and if that fail, they'll try a third; what they miſs in one bargain, they'll ſeek to make amends for in the next. Thus would it be with thee, waſt thou a diligent Chriſtian: Thou would'ſt turn every ſtone, ſeek every corner for the Pearl of price. Didſt thou once by experience know the worth and excellency of true Grace, and the ſatisfying ſweetneſs of converſing with God, thou would'ſt be very diligent in the uſe of all thoſe means whereby theſe advantages are to be attained: What thou had'ſt got at one duty, would prompt thee to another, in hopes to find the like; or if thou haſt miſt of of thy hopes in one, it will put thee upon another, there to get ſatisfaction. If thou found'ſt thy ſelf at a diſtance from God, or under fears of his diſpleaſure, thou would'ſt never be at reſt with thy ſelf till thou hadſt found him, whom thy Soul loved, and had'ſt got a renewed ſenſe of his love to thy Soul: In all thoſe ways wherein he gives a comfortable meeting to his people, wouldſt thou give conſtant attendance, ever earneſtly waiting for the gracious and comfortable manifeſtations of himſelf in thy Soul. But ſince thou canſt ſo contentedly miſs one Priviledge, and that of ſo great importance, it's a ſhrewd ſign that thou improveſt not any as thou oughteſt; and what a wretched ſtarven caſe then muſt thy Soul needs be in?

5. Conſider

5. Consider *What a shame it is that thou shouldest be thus regardless for the provision made for thy Soul, whilst thou art so greedy and forward after any thing that makes for the gratifying of thy flesh.* Generally in the World men refuse no pains to supply their bodily necessities, and yet when here is food provided to their hands, they have no mind to it, because this is only suited to their Souls. How eagerly can they hunt after that which they are never like to obtain, or which, if they do, will never satisfie and fill them, whilst they put away from them the savory meat which God hath brought to them! which would be savory if their taste was not spoiled. Whilst *Manna* is loathed that falls before the tent-door, how do they long after the *Garlick* and *Onions*, and *Flesh-pots of Egypt!* May not I justly say that the *Table of Devils* is more frequented than the *Table of the Lord?* Though men now adays do not offer Sacrifices to Devils, as those Idolaters did, of whom the Apostle speaks, yet do they not sacrifice to their own lusts? And is not this as acceptable service to the Devil, and as provoking to God? And do they not maintain a fellowship with Devils, whilst their nature is so conformable, and their lives so subject to them? Such are all swinish Epicures, *who serve their own belly rather than the Lord Jesus.* Oh what multitudes have we got of such voluptuous ones, who had rather bring sickness upon their Bodies, and damnation upon their Souls, by pleasing their greedy unsatiable Throat, than come to refresh and strengthen themselves with such food, as through the Spirit of life accompanying it, will preserve both Soul and Body to everlasting life. *Wisdom* in vain sends forth her Embassadors, to stand in the highest places of the City to call passengers to the banquet she has made, whilst the destroyer of Souls is hearkened to, calling them off from the right way, telling them, *that stoln waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant:* And with these unlawful pleasures do foolish sinners glut themselves, not remembring, that he doth but feed them for the slaughter, and that *his guests are in the depths of hell*, Prov. 9. Oh how will this aggravate the condemnation of the prophane in our days, that whilst they could not be kept out of the Alehouse and Tavern, but lay there day and night, drinking away their wit, their mony, and oftentimes their life it self, yet no entreaties, could bring them duly to prepare themselves,

and

and come to eat and drink at the Lord's own Table. Hadſt thou but ſuch a favour offered thee as *Haman*, to be entertained at a banquet with the King and Queen, how forwardly wouldeſt thou accept it, and with what pride wouldeſt thou boaſt of it, as he did? But yet when the King of Glory invites thee to be his Gueſt, thou thinkeſt not his invitations worth hearkning to, ſo mean are thy thoughts of his company and fare. Yea, doſt thou not ſee how importunate Beggars are for an Alms? They come to thy door, and ſtand begging for Bread, and will hardly be driven away empty: And yet when thou art thus begged to accept Bread that comes from Heaven, thou wilt not receive it. Here men muſt be *compell'd*, that is, importunately woo'd to come in, and yet they will not be prevailed with: Or if they do come, it is oftentimes in ſuch a careleſs manner, that gives as much diſpleaſure to him who ſent for them, and brings as much miſchief upon themſelves as if they had ſtaid away. But of this I ſpake in the beginning, wherefore I ſhall only add, that it is to me a matter of aſtoniſhment, that thoſe who know their bodies will ſhortly be in the Grave, and who ſay they verily believe their Souls muſt live for ever, that thoſe very men ſhould with ſo much care and unwearineſs feed and maintain their bodies, whilſt willingly and out of meer ſloth, they ſuffer their immortal Souls to ſtarve and periſh eternally.

6. Conſider, *This is a juncture of time wherein eſpecially thou art engaged to do all that in thee lies, toward the ſpeedy ſecuring of thy everlaſting happineſs*; and therefore in the moſt ſolemn manner, to conſecrate thy ſelf to God at the Sacrament, there renouncing all thy ways of wickedneſs whereby thou haſt provoked him, that ſo thy peace may be made with him. For conſider how he hath lately appeared in judgment againſt us, and ſhewn that he hath a ſore controverſie with us: And ſhall not we, the ſurviving Inhabitants of the Land, learn righteouſneſs hereby? Shall not we be ſo wiſe as to meet him in the way, before his anger be kindled againſt us in particular? It is to be feared, the neglect of this very duty, and the groſs miſcarriages in the manner of performing it, have done much toward the haſtning of thoſe judg-

This was written ſoon after the great Plague in 1665. the Firſt Edition being Printed in 1666.

ments we have laid under. And ſhall not this teach thee what to do for the future? Wilt thou go on to provoke the Lord to jealouſie? So that his anger ſhould not be turned away, but his hand ſtretched out ſtill. And if thou art one, who haſt lately been preſerved from the very Graves mouth, whereinto thou waſt ready to fall, being in continual expectation of Death through the *Viſitation*, or any other diſtemper, I would wiſh thee to look back, and conſider what were the thoughts of thy heart at that time; thou, I mean, who haſt lived a looſe and careleſs life? Did not thy Conſcience fly in thy face for all thy wickedneſs? And didſt thou not reſolve, that if God ſhould ſpare thee, thou would'ſt become a new man, and lead another kind of life than thou haſt done? Did it not terrifie thee to remember how thou haſt neglected praying, hearing, and receiving Sacraments? And didſt thou not make promiſes within thy ſelf, that, if God would try thee once again, it ſhould be no more thus? But that thou wouldſt be as diligent and conſtant therein for the time to come, as thou haſt been ſlack and negligent before. Well, now God hath tried thee according to thy deſire: thou who might'ſt have been ſent to the place where Repentance will do no good, art yet kept upon Earth, to ſee what will be the fruit of thy afflictions, where yet thou art within the reach of mercy, if thou throw not thy ſelf out of it. What then ſhall become of all thy good purpoſes and promiſes? Are they gone as ſoon as thy ſickneſs and pain are gone? Are they all forgotten already? Yet be thou ſure God will remember them: And fain would I perſwade *thee* to remember them too; and now in particular, having prepared thy Soul to addreſs thy ſelf to come to the Lord's Table, and there renew all thoſe vows and reſolutions which thou madeſt in the time of ſickneſs and danger; and humbly implore mercy and pardon for thy former careleſneſs, and all thy tranſgreſſions and help from God to walk more cloſely with him for the future. Let me now in ſeaſon be thy Remembrancer from the Lord, and bring to mind what engagements thou haſt made to him, and ſee thou be faithful to them: but if they be ſlighted, and all that I have ſaid to thee be ſlighted, becauſe now thou art luſty and well, and ſeeſt no death near thee, and haſt ſomething elſe to do, than to trouble thy ſelf with being ſo religious, as dying men

uſe

uſe to be, yet let it ſink into thy thoughts, that there is juſt ſuch another time coming upon thee; very ſhortly thou wilt be ſick again, and caſt upon thy death-bed, and doſt thou not think the very ſame thoughts will then come into thy mind again? When thou ſhalt conſider thy ſelf juſt lanching forth into eternity, and ſhalt look back upon all thy ungodly deeds, and thy undervaluing the means of Grace, by an improvement of which thou mighteſt have been made ready for ſuch an hour as this, wilt thou not then begin again to fall to wiſhing that it had been otherwiſe, and to purpoſing thou wilt be better hereafter, if once again thou mayſt be recovered? But when thy Conſcience with a redoubled fury, ſhall riſe up and bid thee remember, how thou didſt long ago, in the ſame condition, ſeem as penitent as this comes to, but yet all came to nothing, and that therefore thou haſt no reaſon to expect a farther tryal; and ſhall moreover tell thee, that it is moſt likely all this is out of meer ſlaviſh fear and not out of any true love to God and Holineſs; how wilt thou be able to hold up under ſuch a dreadful charge as this from thy own awaken'd Conſcience? It is *my* great deſire to prevent thy being then overwhelmed with ſuch thoughts as theſe; and if *thou* art but as willing, they may effectually be prevented, even by ſpeedily ſetting upon ſuch a courſe, as will be the rejoycing of thy Soul at that day, when nothing elſe will rejoyce thee, but the *teſtimony of God's Spirit witneſſing with thy Conſcience, that by the grace of God thou haſt had thy converſation in ſimplicity and Godly ſincerity.* For without this it would be but a poor refuge for thee, to call for a Sacrament on thy death-bed, who didſt ſlight it in thy health.

7. Conſider, *Whether by this contempt of the* Ordinances *of Chriſt, thou mayſt not provoke him juſtly to withdraw them from us*, and to beſtow them upon a people that will more prize, and frequent, and better improve them, than we have done. If Children be ſo indifferent to their food, that they play with it, or throw it away, it's fit it ſhould be taken from them. When people are wanton and curious, that they know not how to be pleaſed, but upon the leaſt diſlike reject their Spiritual food, it's a ſign they want the beſt of ſawces, a good ſtomach, which it's juſt they ſhould be brought to by being kept ſhort. Or if they be ſo lazy, that they think it more ado than needs, to be

diligent in thoſe exerciſes of Religion, which our Lord hath appointed, and take the greateſt priviledges for burdens, is it not juſt they ſhould be eaſed of them; for who will continue kindneſſes to thoſe, who take them for injuries? Yea, can they expect any other, than ere long to be removed into a world, where they ſhall never more be troubled with ſuch heavy impoſitions? You that are now ready to ſay what a ſtir's here with Sermons, Prayers, and Sacraments? and think all your time loſt that's ſpent in them, and are vext to think, that you muſt have ſo many interruptions from your ſins or worldly buſineſs? be content a while, and you ſhall have no cauſe long to complain of theſe things you now judge ſo grievous. There's none of this ado in the Hell your ungodlineſs leads to; but whether there be not ſadder things there, your Experience ere long is like to give you full conviction, if nothing ſooner will convince you. Do but judge reaſonably, muſt it not needs be an high diſpleaſure to God, to ſee his Creatures contemn the moſt precious mercies, as if they were nothing worth? How would you take it, if when out of courteſie you had invited a poor man to your Table and had made ready the beſt that could be had for him, he ſhould find fault with your meat, and ask you why you troubled him to come from home to ſuch a poor Dinner as this? Would you think he deſerved to have the woiſt bit there? If your Landlord, or any rich neighbour ſhould bid you to a Feaſt, would you ſend word by his Servant, that he had nothing worth coming for, but that you could provide for your ſelf better at home? Or if you ſhould ſend ſuch word, do you think you ſhould be invited twice? And yet thus ſawcy and unthankful have you been toward the great God, whilſt you have kept away from his Table; notwithſtanding which, he hath again and again ſent forth his Servants to invite you thither; in that way and to thoſe ends which he hath revealed. But, oh Sirs, do no more ſo fooliſhly, ſo impudently, I beſeech you, leſt at length you ſhould move God to withdraw from you the mercies you trample on; and you, when it is too late, ſhould be put to ſeek with tears thoſe bleſſings which once you cared not for, and therefore muſt never have.

8. *Is it not a very great ſign, that you forget Chriſt himſelf*, whilſt you can thus quietly paſs from year to year without remembring him at the Sacrament? Could you poſſibly do thus if you bore him upon your minds, and were ſenſibly affected with the frequent thoughts of all his love towards you? Would you not then take all opportunities to expreſs this your thankful ſenſe of his kindneſs? The Children of *Iſrael*, we read, were enjoyned to keep the Feaſt of the Paſſover, as a memorial of their deliverance out of *Ægypt*; and, if when they were come into *Canaan*, they ſhould after a few years have left it off, might not God juſtly have tax'd them with forgetting their deliverance it ſelf? and is not the caſe much what the ſame here? So we find, *Exod.* 12. 26, 27. that when their children ſhould ſee them keeping this Feaſt, and ask what the meaning was, they were to anſwer, *It is the ſacrifice of the Lord's Paſſover, who paſſed over the houſes of the children of Iſrael in Ægypt, in that night after he ſmote the Ægyptians, and delivered our houſes.* If now theſe Children, when they were of capacity, ſhould refuſe to keep this Feaſt, as they were commanded, is it not a ſign that either they believed not what their Parents told them, or elſe thought there was nothing in it worth the remembrance? Thus if any of you ſhould demand what's the meaning of our aſſembling together at certain times, to eat and drink Bread and Wine in ſo ſerious a manner, it may be anſwered you, *This is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which he appointed in the night wherein he was betrayed, for a memorial of that death, whereby he deſtroyed the kingdom of Satan, and delivered his people.* If you now take this to be true, and think it deſerves any ſolemn Remembrance, come as you have been directed, and joyn with the reſt in this work; if you refuſe this, you can never ſure have the face to ſay, that you do in your hearts remember Chriſt. If one that had beſtowed ſome great matters upon the Town he lived in, ſhould order at his death, that the Inhabitants of that Town ſhould, upon a certain day in the year, meet together at a Feaſt, to keep up the memory of his bounty; if they neglected this, might it not well be ſaid they forgot their Benefactor? And does not your neglect of this Sacramental Feaſt, as plainly ſhew a forgetfulneſs of your great Benefactor who ordained it? O a wonderful! that ever men

who have heard, who Jeſus Chriſt is, and what he hath done, ſhould be thus unmindful of him. Ah Sirs, read the Hiſtory of his life, think ſoundly of his Death, and conſider then, whether he thus deſerves to be forgotten by you. Had he had no more thought of us, where had we now been, and what had become of us for ever? Hath he done ſo much for you, even without your ſeeking, and when he requires ſo little of you, is he denied? If but a dying Friend ſhould take his Ring off his finger, and put it on yours, and bid you look on that Ring, and remember him, ſhould you not eaſily do it? But much more, if this Friend had upon any account given up himſelf to die for your preſervation, and ſhould only engage you by remembring him, to beware of that fault whereby your life was endangered, and his was loſt, would not the memory of ſuch a Friend be ever freſh, and precious with you, if you had any humanity, any ſenſe of friendſhip and kindneſs? And would not your Bowels be even turned within you, whenever you beheld this Ring? But alaſs! how far comes this ſhort of the kindneſs which Chriſt hath ſhewn to poor ſinners, in many circumſtances, as might eaſily be ſhewn? And yet how is all diſregarded with the moſt? How few obey this, that was one of his laſt injunctions to his followers, before he offered up himſelf on their behalf, that they ſhould feed on his Body and Blood here repreſented, and remember and love him, who was bruiſed and poured forth as an Attonement for them, and ſet themſelves againſt the ſins that occaſioned all this. Can men be guilty of worſe Ingratitude?

9. If then Chriſt be ſo far from your thoughts, that you take no pleaſure in the Remembrance of him, *Bethink you before-hand how you will be able to look him in the face, when you will be cited to appear before him whether you will or not.* Be aſſured, whoever thou art, to whom the memory of Chriſt is no ways delightful, to thee his preſence will be moſt terrible. If thou haſt been well pleaſed to have him as abſent from thy heart, as his bodily preſence is from the World, thou wilt never know how to abide the terrour of his appearance, and yet abide it thou muſt. It will then be with thee juſt as it was with that wicked Servant whom we read of, *Luk.* 12. 45, 46. who inſtead of looking to his Maſters Family in his abſence, to give them their portion of Meat in due ſeaſon, as he was commanded

ed, *ver.* 42. thinks within himſelf, that his Lord delays his coming, and therefore begins to eat and drink, and be drunken, and what follows? *Why the Lord of that Servant will come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware, and will cut him in ſunder, and appoint his portion with hypocrites and unbelievers.* Even thus mayſt thou juſtly expect it will be with thee, who neglecteſt to take that portion of meat for thy Soul which Chriſt hath provided for thee, and hadſt rather pamper thy fleſh, and indulge it in gluttony and drunkenneſs. That very Jeſus, whom thou takeſt no pleaſure to remember, and could'ſt be very well content never to come nearer him, never to behold him, or to have any thing more to do with him, even he ſhall at length ſurprize thee by the ſuddenneſs of his dreadful appearance. Though thou would'ſt not *Remember* him, yet then thou muſt, thou ſhalt *ſee* him. Though thou could'ſt caſt him out of thy *thoughts*, yet thou ſhalt not be able to avoid his *preſence*, till he himſelf ſhall have utterly baniſh'd thee from him. Though thou be unmindful of him, yet flatter not thy ſelf with a conceit that he'll forget this thy unworthy behaviour: no, but he'll remember it, to recompence it on thy own head in that day of his vengeance. As his people may firmly build upon it, that he'll never *forget their labour of love*, ſo may his enemies be ſure, that he will not forget their lazineſs, and want of love. Will it not be ſad for thee at that day, *to call upon the rocks and mountains to hide thee from his face*, and all in vain? And yet is it not juſt it ſhould be thus with thee, who art now call'd into Chriſts gracious preſence, into the neareſt communion with him, and thou runneſt away, and willfully hideſt thy ſelf, and will not be perſwaded to come in? Alaſs Man! then expect other uſage from Chriſt than here thou foundeſt in the day of his patience, whilſt he waited to be gracious. He will not come then to offer pardons to the guilty, and to beſeech their acceptance of them, and of the Sacraments to ſeal them: no, but he will then only abſolve all thoſe who have already got their pardon, and condemn thoſe who have not: Wherefore if thou think'ſt it of any conſequence to look Chriſt in the face with comfort at the laſt day, now get an acquaintance with him; put on thy wedding Garment of Repentance, Faith, and Love, and come hither to be his Gueſt: With

an humble boldneſs come and feaſt with him, yea feed upon him, and let him be made familiar to thy Soul that his coming may fill thee with joy, and not with horrour.

10. Laſtly, if after all admonitions and invitations thou liveſt in the neglect of this duty, *do'ſt thou not give us too much ground to fear, that thou art no true Chriſtian?* I know it is not thy coming hither on any faſhion that will ſufficiently prove thee a good Chriſtian; but yet thy total forbearance may rather make thee ſuſpected to be none at all. For what haſt thou to plead on thy own behalf? The greateſt argument of thy Chriſtianity is thy being baptized: But this was done in thy infancy, and who knows, whether thou ſtand'ſt to it or not, if thou wilt not publickly own that thou doſt ſo? If it was the cuſtom amongſt us, that when a Father is liſted into an Army, he ſhould ſet down the names of his Sons alſo, there to ſtand till they came to ſixteen years of age, at which time they were to go in, and write their own Names, or elſe to be caſhiered; If they, when they are come to theſe years, ſhould refuſe to give in their Names, do they not hereby ſhew that they have no mind to be Souldiers? And is it not a queſtion whether thou owneſt Chriſt Jeſus for thy Captain, if thou wilt not make thy appearance with the reſt, at times appointed for the acknowledgment of thy relation to him? If the King ſhould command all that were of age in a Town, to come to the Market-place, and there take the Oath of Allegiance, if they would be held for good Subjects, how would they be look'd upon, who ſhould ſtay away and refuſe to do it? Now have I not before ſhewn, how expreſs the command of Chriſt is to all his Diſciples, that, beſide all other duties, being rightly prepared, they ſhould celebrate this Sacrament in remembrance of him, as an evidence and Symbol of their relation to, and communion with him? How then can we hold them for true Diſciples, that reject and ſlight it? But here give me leave, according to my promiſe, to meet with two or three Objections againſt the performance of this duty, before I come to give directions for it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Sacraments are not to be accounted vain, becauſe Externals.

1. Obj. PErhaps then ſome in the firſt place may ſay, *What need have we of ſuch outward ſhadows and ceremonies, ſo long as we have the ſubſtance, Chriſt himſelf, and do truly believe in him? What good can we get by ſuch external ſervices as theſe? Theſe are low beggerly things, not ſuited to theſe more ſpiritual times of the Goſpel.*

Though I have before ſaid enough to this, yet becauſe there are thoſe who confidently talk at this rate, and are very buſie in perverting common people, I ſhall ſay ſomething farther by way of anſwer to it.

Anſ. 1. And firſt I would demand of you, who is fit to be Judg in this caſe, what you ought to do, and what not? Are you Servants, or are you your own Maſters? *Came the Word of God forth from you?* Was Chriſtian Religion ſomething of your deviſing, that you may frame it, and appoint the duties of it as you ſhall ſee beſt? *Or came this Word to you only?* Did he who revealed it to the World, priviledge you to pick and chuſe ſome duties, and omit others, as you ſaw good? if you ſay yes, pray produce your licenſe, and let us ſee it; for we find no ſuch thing recorded in that Word, which we all acknowledge to come from God. And if you have got any private orders contrary thereto, give us ſufficient evidence to prove them of Divine Authority, and then we ſhall be ſilent. But till then it muſt needs be accounted ſtrange impudence, for filly worms to quarrel with the inſtitutions of infinite wiſdom. For if God's authority may be regarded, rather than the fond opinion of proud and giddy men, we need not be to ſeek what to do in this matter, Chriſt having ſo plainly commanded us, *to do this in remembrance of him*, as I have before ſhewed.

2. And ſince there is ſuch a command, I wonder how it can be accounted an unprofitable thing to obey it? Is there no profit in pleaſing God? And can we pleaſe him any other way, than by obeying his commands? Let the matter of the command be what it will, if we know it be given

given us by God, that's warrant enough for our practice, and ground for our expectation of benefit by it, though we could not much see the reason of the thing in it self abstracted from the command, (though here the case is otherwise, as I have also before manifested.)

3. If any should say now we lie under no obligation to this duty, let them shew where Christ's command to his Disciples is repealed, or where there is the least intimation given, that there was a time to come when it should be out of date, and cease to oblige our Consciences. Nay, are we not taught there was no such time to come? For do we not find the reason and end of this Ordinance assigned to be such, as will make it necessary to the last day? And this is to prevent all exception plainly expresst; *Hereby you shew forth Christ's death till he come*, 1 Cor. 11. 26.

4. Do not they who tell us the Sacraments are but shadows, and therefore now to cease, hereby pretend a new dispensation of the Gospel, purer and higher than that which was set up by Christ and his Apostles after the ceasing of the Levitical Worship? For long after this, we find Baptism and the Lord's Supper in use. Wherefore if they are now to be laid aside, is it not because that was but an Infant-state of the Church, wherein such ceremonies were requisite, which are now needless, it being grown to greater maturity, and the members engaged to be more spiritual, and taken off from those carnal services, wherein such mean persons as the Apostles and their followers were conversant? But do not they notoriously violate the truth, as well as modesty, who tell us this? Do we either in the old Testament, or new, meet with any Prophesies, that intimate to us a new dispensation, or different way of ordering the Christian Church, after Christ had fully establish'd it? We find such frequently as to the Jewish Ceremonies, but no where, that I know, relating to any Laws or Orders that Christ hath appointed. And none, I hope, will say our Sacraments were like them, of a typical nature, and so to cease by the coming in, and accomplishment of somewhat which they signified. Though the first dispensation under *Moses* was imperfect, yet where are we allowed to find fault with the second introduced by Christ? Is not this Gospel-state the *Kingdom that cannot be moved*, in opposition to the Jewish state of things, which was

shaken

ſhaken and removed? as we may probably interpret, *Heb.* 12. 26, 27. Wherefore they who would make us believe, that in theſe latter days the Church is to be reformed, not only from the corruptions men brought in, but from the Ordinances which Chriſt ſet up, what do they but *trouble us, by endeavouring to pervert the Goſpel of Chriſt?* approaching too near to thoſe, whom the Apoſtle ſo vehemently pronounced accurſed, *Gal.* 1. 9. Thoſe indeed would have brought in cuſtoms which Chriſt had abrogated, and theſe would abrogate ſuch as he hath ordained; and when we remember who ordained them, it may ſufficiently awe us from ſlighting them, though they may ſeem but leſſer matters, and, as it were, appendages to Religion. And it ſhould make all ſober Chriſtians the more afraid, of hearkning after any new and more ſpiritual diſpenſations of the Goſpel, when we remember the unſpeakable miſchief, which this groundleſs pretence hath done, and may do to the Church. Under this notion the *Familiſts* vent their horrid fancies; and even *Mahomet* himſelf made uſe of this pretence, when he firſt ſet up in the World: and ſo any man that hath a mind to advance ſome new way, which he can find no ground for in the Goſpel, may pretend that it is ſomething higher and more excellent than Chriſt thought fit at firſt to reveal, but now in theſe laſt days he hath ſent him as his Meſſenger to publiſh it to the World. And as well may we hearken to any ſuch Impoſture as to thoſe who tell us, that though, it's true, Chriſtians at the firſt were Baptized, and received the Lord's Supper, yet now have nothing to do with theſe things, bring arrived to a more perfect ſtate than they were acquainted with.

5. How unreaſonable is it, that they ſhould oppoſe thoſe things which ſo well agree together, and mutually promote each other? whilſt they ſay they believe in Chriſt, and therefore regard not this piece of outward Service? But I wonder where they find, that Faith in Chriſt may excuſe a man from receiving the Sacrament. I ſhould think it rather engaged him to it. Far be it from me to preſs this duty, as that which will give men the leaſt diſpenſation to neglect any other; nay, I hope I have ſufficiently ſhewed all along, that I preſs it as a ſtrong obligation, motive and help to holineſs, both of heart and life. Hither ſhould men come purpoſely to exerciſe

and

and ſtrengthen their Graces; and therefore it's a moſt fooliſh thing to ſay they have got Grace in their hearts, and will thereupon ſtay away. If you believe in Chriſt, come hither and profeſs that you do ſo, for ſo he hath bidden you to do, and be not ſo ridiculous as to ſay, becauſe you have faith, therefore you will not in this manner profeſs it. If a King ſhould command all his Subjects that would go to ſuch a War, to come and ſet down their Names, and afterwards come and anſwer to them at a Muſtering, would it not be a wiſe piece of buſineſs, for any of them to ſay, he would fight in the War, and therefore he would not have his name ſet down, nor appear with the reſt at the times of Muſtering? And is it not much-what the ſame for any to pretend they'll keep Covenant with Chriſt, and therefore will not make or renew it in that ſolemn manner he hath commanded? What? wilt thou ſay thou loveſt Chriſt, and art ſincerely thankful for his love, and therefore wilt not joyn with thy Fellow-Chriſtians, in the remembrance of his mercy and expreſſion of thy Gratitude? Does this ſound like reaſon? And yet no better is to be found in thy objection. Might not the Apoſtles far better have ſaid, they needed not the help of this Sacrament, to put them in mind of Chriſt, who was ever freſh in their thoughts? But on the contrary, becauſe he was ſo much in their thoughts, therefore they were ſo frequent in this duty. And was thy Spirit like theirs, thy practice would not be ſo contrary. And let me tell thee farther, its much to be feared, thou haſt little or no Grace at all, who ſlighteſt any way that Chriſt hath ordained, for the increaſe of Grace. A wiſe man uſeth not to ſay, I enjoy my health well, and therefore I care not for my food, ſince this is the means for continuance of his health. But it ſeems thou denieſt, that thou canſt get any good by this Ordinance, wherefore,

6. In the next place let me ask thee, Doſt thou imagine thy ſelf arrived to the utmoſt pitch of perfection, ſo that thou lookeſt upon all means and Ordinances as things below thee? If ſo, I cannot now ſtand to ſhew thee the pride and ignorace of this conceit, which are both ſo great, that it's danger thou wilt not be convinced of either. But waſt thou indeed ſo excellent a creature as thou takeſt thy ſelf to be, yet methinks thou ſhould'ſt not imagine, that

thou

thou art above the exercise of Grace, or returning thanks for what thou hast received, and even these reasons may bring thee to the duty I am now pleading for. Or if this be none of thy conceit, do'st thou imagine that the Soul can get no good by external means, which work upon the senses? if this be thy opinion, thou seemest not to consider the nature and frame of man in this present state, wherein bodily things do so mightily affect him, and he is beholden to his senses for all, or almost all the knowledge which he hath. By this reason men could profit nothing by reading or hearing, which is so contrary to all experience. And by this reason in the time of the Law no good was to be got by those Ceremonies, that typified Christ to come, which is a very bold assertion, and most unreasonable; and I hope the clearer representations of him, and his benefits in our Sacraments, have much the advantage of those darker shadows.

7. Is it not very great impudence and ingratitude, when Christ hath chosen to deal with us in such a sensible manner as he saw most suitable to our natures, for us thereupon to call his Wisdom and Goodness in question? When he calls us to offer our bodies, as well as souls to him, and to glorifie him both with Soul and Body, shall we we say he cares not for bodily service, and thereupon neglect all those services, wherein the body is employed? And when he out of indulgence to our weakness, hath provided external helps meet for us, shall we think our selves too high for them? Is not this most vile pride and ingratitude? And consider whatever we dare to speak in disparagement of Christ's Ordinances, as if they were empty useless things, will be found to reflect foully upon the honour of Christ himself the Law-giver.

8. Where do we find any of the pious *Jews* before Christ's time, complaining of their Ceremonies as burdensome, unprofitable things? Afterwards indeed, when they were maintained in opposition to Christ, whom they led to, and ended in, they are call'd *beggarly Elements*, and carnal Ordinances; but we hear not of this language before. Though then God frequently expres'd this very little regard to them, compared to the more substantial duties of the Moral Law, yet where read we that any of the Godly of those days rejected or disused them? And what, is our bondage sorer than theirs? Hath Christ put a yoak

upon

upon his Diſciple heavier than he took off? And what do they better than ſay thus, who throw off his gracious inſtitutions, as a burden too heavy for them to bear?

9. Methinks this is ſo like the language of Infidels, that all who have any mind to be thought Chriſtians ſhould abhor it. What wonder would it be for an Infidel to laugh at Baptiſm, or the Lords Supper, if he ſhould ſee them adminiſtred, and ask what Good was to be got with waſhing with water, or receiving a little Bread and Wine? But for one who pretends to own the Authority of Chriſt, to ſpeak after the ſame manner, ſeems ſomething ſtrange. If God give a command to waſh in *Jordan* for the cure of a Leproſie, it beſeems none but a Heathen *Naaman*, to ask whether *Abana* and *Pharphar*, Rivers of *Damaſcus*, are not as good as the Waters of *Iſrael*. And he diſcovers little more Religion, who ſhall ſaucily demand, why Bread and Wine at his own Table will not do his Soul as much good, as at the Sacrament.

10. I would fain know of theſe men, whether Chriſt had power to appoint an Ordinance of this kind, to the uſe of which, Chriſtians in all ſucceeding Generations ſhould be oblig'd? If they grant he had, as I ſuppoſe they dare not deny it, then let them ſay what he ſhould have ſaid or done more to lay this obligation upon them, than he hath done in the preſent caſe. If again they find fault with the nature of this Ordinance, as if it was not ſuited to be perpetual, becauſe of its unprofitableneſs, let them tell when it begun to be ſo. Was it from the firſt Inſtitution? Or after a certain time? If from the beginning, what was it ordained for? Why would Chriſt ſet up an Ordinance that was good for nothing? And why were the Diſciples ſo frequent in it? If afterwards, let them name the time, and give the reaſon of its degeneracy. But farther, was Chriſt able to make this Sacrament profitable to thoſe, who ſhould conſcientiouſly attend upon it? They who ſay it was not, muſt not take it ill to be thought Infidels: but if they yeild he was, then let them alledge ſome reaſon why he would not, or rather let them ſhew wherein he hath been wanting to it, to make it ſo profitable: If theſe fault-finders might have been at the firſt appointment hereof, what a kind of one would they have it, that it might have been more uſeful than now they judge it is? Is not the death of Chriſt here ſet out before our Eyes?

And

And may not that in ſome ſort affect us, ſuppoſing we know the deſign of it, as well as diſcourſes that reach our ears? May not this awake us to lively thoughts of Chriſt, of the reaſon and ends of his Death, and ſo quicken us to the exerciſe of Repentance and Faith, and ſtir us up to deſire after him, and to thankfulneſs for his love? And when our Souls are wrought into ſo good a frame, may we not reaſonably expect larger communications of Grace from that overflowing fountain of Goodneſs, who requires nothing more than a right diſpoſition in us that we may be made partakers of his Bounty? Not to mention how fit a way this is, for the conferring a right to, and giving aſſurance of relative and future priviledges.

11. Beſides the Example of thoſe in the firſt ages of the Church, methinks the daily Experience of the generality of ſober Chriſtians may abundantly confute this conceit, that there is no good to be got by frequenting the Lord's Table; were theſe demanded one by one whether they had not found the contrary, I believe the moſt of them would profeſs they had; though through their own fault they would acknowledge, they had not hereby profited ſo much as they might. How many poor Souls have come in hither heavy and dull, and have gone away enlivened? How many have come dejected and ſad, and gone away refreſh'd and chear'd, and have long after enjoyed the benefit of this duty? But if they who make this objection, never found any ſuch thing, it would ſpeak more modeſty and juſtice too, to lay the blame on themſelves, rather than on the means which Chriſt hath afforded them.

12. Laſtly, I would deſire all that are impartial, to conſider, how plainly God hath witneſs'd againſt this ſort of men, who are the cheif patrons of that Opinion I oppoſe, in ſuffering them to be ſo infatuated and beſotted in their own minds; that, whilſt they have impudently dar'd to reject the Ordinances of Chriſt as needleſs things, they themſelves have dotcd upon the moſt ridiculous inconſiderable trifles, as if they were matters of ſome huge conſequence. Have not thoſe very men, who cry down the Lord's Supper and Baptiſm, of one ſort or other, beſide many other duties, as formal things, yet with a great deal of earneſtneſs call'd upon us to ſay, *thou* rather than *you*, to a ſingle perſon, not to call Men *Maſter*, nor to put off our Hats one to another, with a multitude of the like Fopperies?

Theſe

These it seems are substaintial things which they have devised, whilst Christ's own appointments are empty and carnal. What's this but a Mark set upon them, (and few Sects are without one) to let the World know they came not from God, that none who are considerative might be endangered by their delusions? And let this suffice for Answer to the Objection; whereon I have been the larger, in that it is of such ill consequence, and hath too far spread it self amongst giddy unstable people.

CHAP. XIII.

Against too seldom communicating in the Sacrament.

2. *Obj.* IN the next place some may say, *We have already received the Sacrament, and so have satisfied the command of Christ, and therefore may be excused from it for the future.*

I should scarce have dream'd of such an Objection, had I not heard it us'd; but to dispatch it in two words.

1. I have before acknowledg'd, that Christ hath not told us how frequently, or how oft in our lives we must perform this Duty, but yet we may learn from the Words of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. That it is to be done more than once: For saith he, *As often as you eat, &c. i. e.* every time that you eat. And then I have shew'd you what was the practice of the first Christians, which may well hold the place of a Rule in this case. Wherefore you ought to obey the injunction of your Pastor, so oft as he shall in prudence think meet to call you to the Lord's Table, since you have so much reason for obedience, and none to alledge for your refusal.

2. And in the next place, pray tell me, had you any reason for this Duty when you first perform'd it? You'll scarce say no, I suppose; and if you had any, then I ask, whether the same reason does not still continue? If it does, why should not your practice be continued agreeably thereto? Have you not still some necessities of soul which may here be supplied, as well as you had then? Is not

not the Death of Christ as well worthy your Remembrance now as formerly? And if you heretofore received any advantage by what you did, methinks you should be more inclin'd to hold on therein. But here perhaps some may reply, putting the Objection in another shape, that they have often attended on this Ordinance, and yet have found no advantage by it, and therefore being out of heart and hope, are ready to throw it quite off. To whom I answer.

1. If it be thus indeed, you have great reason to acknowledge the fault is your own. Either you have not been so diligent in your preparations as you ought, or else you have been careless afterward, thinking you had done when the work was over, as if no more was required to make a Sacrament strengthning to your Souls, than to make food nourishing to your Bodies, barely to receive it, and there's an end; whenas there is a serious consideration of what you have done, and a constant watchfulness afterwards, necessary to make it beneficial to you, as I may have occasion to shew anon. And especially see if you give no kind of Allowance to some pleasant sin or other, which you are hardly willing to be quite delivered from; such a secret partial cherishing of any lust whatever, will be sure to keep you low and barren, and render all means unprofitable. And thus it is also like to be with you, if you are swallowed up in worldly business, or do too sweetly relish any sensible enjoyment.

2. You who complain you can get nothing by Sacraments, will say the same, I suppose by other means and duties; and will you therefore cast off these too? Will you lay aside hearing and praying upon this pretence? You may as well: For the reason holds as good for one as the other.

3. But farther, I would have you beware of mistaking your selves, imagining that you profit not when you do. And therefore consider what your expectations have been, and what you have found. Perhaps you have expected great joys, and as it were, sensible assurances of God's love, and to be afterward freed from all Troubles and Doubtings: Or you have expected a perfect freedom from some trouble some temptations wherewith you use to be haunted, and from the very first motions of sin in your selves; and because you have found none of this in those

measures you look'd for, therefore you conclude you have met with nothing. But this is no right arguing: For these are priviledges that you may go without all your days, and yet thrive under the means too; and therefore by them you cannot judge of your profiting: But if you can find the strength of sin broken, and your heart more set against it, and you are more throughly perswaded to comply with the whole will of God, being firmly resolved to keep close to him to the last, discovering more and more the emptiness of all Creatures, and his All-sufficiency, being more prevalently and steadily bent to chuse him as your only portion; if it be so, you may be sure you grow in Grace, and are better by the means you enjoy, and may be therefore encouraged to continue in the use of them.

4. But lastly, however it be with you, yet be you patient and constant in doing your work, and then leave the event to God. Wherein upon examination you find you have been wanting to your selves, be more careful for the future, in the due preparing and managing of our own Hearts, and so wait upon God in his appointed way. Let your desires be carried out after that which is most needful for you, and which God hath promised to give, chiefly after Grace, and secondarily after Comfort, remembring all you have is to come from the free mercy of a wise God, to whom you must refer it what measures of these you shall receive, and how soon it shall be. Only, I say, let it be your business quietly to wait his leisure, in the use of those means he hath prescribed you, for which I might give many reasons: But I shall wave all, only demanding of you, whether those spiritual blessings you so earnestly long after are worth the waiting for? If you say no, you deserve to go for ever without them: But if you grant they are, then pray tell me, whether it is more likely to attain them by waiting in that way wherein they are to be found, or by turning out of it? This I hope, is no difficult case to resolve. If your Friend be gone a journy, and you have a mind to meet him upon his return, are you not more likely to meet with him, by holding on still in that Road which he'll be sure to come, than by going back again, or turning to some by-path, meerly to gratifie your Laziness or Impatience? Wherefore when your Hopes are at the lowest ebb, it is most unreasonable and foolish,

fooliſh, to cry with that wicked King, *Why ſhould we wait on the Lord any longer? There is no hope, wherefore let us leave our Duties, and caſt aſide all.* Be ſure there is no hope in ſuch a courſe as this, but rather a certainty of periſhing, whereas if there be ſafety in any way, it is in an obedient patient dependance upon God; yea, in this way there is certain ſafety; embrace it therefore as your wiſeſt, your only courſe. Do but ſee that you wait for the Lord, and aſſure your ſelves *you ſhall not be aſhamed, your Eyes ſhall not always fail.* Get into the Pſalmiſt's frame, *Pſalm* 130. 5, 6. *To wait for the Lord more than they that watch for the Morning*, and at length ſhall the Lord manifeſt himſelf to the joy of your Souls, as ſure as the morning light will appear to thoſe who watch for it.

CHAP. XIV.

The Objection of unfitneſs anſwered. As propoſed by the doubting and the careleſs.

3 *Obj.* SOme again there are, and thoſe not a few, that will be ready to ſay, *They find themſelves unfit for the Sacrament, and therefore dare not come leſt it prove to their hurt, rather than to their advantage.* Several ſorts of perſons may upon different grounds raiſe this objection. Firſt, the ſincere and humble Chriſtian, whoſe Soul is in the dark, and through Ignorance of himſelf, or not conſidering the tenour of the Covenant, and through the prevalency of temptation, or melancholy, he may without reaſon condemn himſelf, as if his eſtate was worſe than it is. To theſe I have ſomething to ſay.

1. Why is it, you judge your ſelves unfit for this Ordinance? Is it becauſe you are not ſo qualified as I have before ſhewn all Communicants ought to be? I am confident, upon a true enquiry, you will find the contrary: Wherefore be not haſty and raſh in paſſing a cenſure upon your ſelves, as if you were reſolved to comply with the deſign of Satan to keep you in ſorrow, but examine things ſoberly, and without paſſion, and then give judgment upon your ſtate according to true Evidence. If you be found

faithful Diſciples, and unfeigned lovers of Chriſt, you will grant your ſelves meet to come to that Feaſt which is made for ſuch. Tell me then in one Word; are you not from your very Souls, willing that Chriſt ſhould be your Saviour, and take his own courſe with you, to bring you to God in Glory? Is there any thing in all the World that your heart is ſet more upon than this, even that you may be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt? Would you not account the aſſurance of this a richer mercy, than to be made owners of the whole World? Yea, would you not give a thouſand ſuch Worlds as this, if you had them, for the love of God in Chriſt? Is not this it which lies heavieſt upon your Spirits, and makes you walk ſo ſadly, even the fears leſt you are without true Grace, and ſhould go without God and Chriſt for ever? And yet can the Devil ſo befool you, as to perſwade you all this while that you love not God? Have you got any thing here below more dear to you than this Favour? Do you take delight in any courſe that you know is diſpleaſing to him? Do you not long to be made more conformable to him? To know and love, and enjoy him more, and do him better ſervice in the World? Would it not be the great joy of your Souls always to walk cloſely with him, and retain a ſtrong ſenſe of his Preſence, and all his Excellencies upon your minds? To converſe with him more feelingly & powerfully, and in all your Approaches to him, to be filled with a ſuitable Reverence, Humility, Seriouſneſs, and all holy Affections? Would any thing pleaſe you more than to pleaſe your God? Are you not then beſt at eaſe when you find your Hearts moſt enlarged, and carried out after him? Had you not rather be following after God in the Ways of holineſs, and the Duties of Religion, than to enjoy all the pleaſures and merriments of ſenſual ones? Is there any Duty from which you would be diſpenſed with? Any command that you would have aboliſh'd? Had you not infinitely rather your Heart was brought up to the fulleſt compliance with it? Have you any Luſt which you would fain be allowed to keep? Is it a trouble to you, that you muſt part with your ſins or elſe be damned for them? Or rather, Is it not your greateſt trouble, that you lived ſo long without God, and did ſo much againſt him in the days of our unregeneracy? And if you had that time to paſs over again, would you not prefer a life of the greateſt ſuffering before ſuch a life of ſinning?

ſinning? And is not your Soul really burdened with thoſe remnants of Corruptions which you yet feel in your ſelves? Do you not ſtrive againſt them, and earneſtly deſire to be rid of them? Would you not account it a bleſſed priviledge, to be more free from ignorance, pride, earthlineſs, diſtruſt, ſelf-will, dullneſs, and diſtraction in holy duties? Would not a deliverance from theſe be more welcome, than to be freed from any outward afflictions you may lie under? All you that are ſincere (and to ſuch only I am now ſpeaking) cannot but acknowledge that the frame of your ſouls is ſuch as I have been enquiring after, how harſhly ſoever you may conclude of your ſelves notwithſtanding. And if ſuch as you, that love God and Holineſs, hate ſin, and are humbled for it, have not right to the promiſes of mercy through Chriſt, I wonder who have? Why therefore will you not come to receive the ſeal to thoſe promiſes which do ſo evidently belong to you or none? But after all, perhaps you'll cry, you cannot *believe*, and therefore dare not come hither, ſince this is a Sacrament provided for *Believers* only.

This Objection, I ſuppoſe, ariſeth principally from your miſtake of the nature of ſaving faith. Wherefore tell me, I pray, what do you mean when you ſay, you cannot believe? Do you not really believe, that the witneſs which the Scripture gives of Chriſt is true? What ever temptations you may have to infidelity, yet is not this the prevalent perſwaſion of your minds; that Jeſus Chriſt is the true Meſſiah, by whom the fallen World is to be recovered out of its ruins? Do you not believe him furniſh'd with full power and authority to accompliſh his deſign? Do you not believe that his death was ſufficient for the ranſom of the World, and all other truths concerning him that you find revealed in the Goſpel? And then are you not reſolved that this Jeſus ſhall be your Saviour, and none but he? Do you not from your hearts acknowledge your ſelves miſerable loſt Creatures, altogether unable to reſtore your ſelves, or to do any thing that may ſatisfie God's juſtice, or in it ſelf deſerve Recompence or Acceptance? So that you are convinc'd, if ever you are ſav'd, it muſt be through Chriſt; and are you not earneſtly deſirous of this above all things, that God for his Son's ſake would pardon and ſave you? Yea, more than that, are you not ſincerely willing that Chriſt ſhould rule in

your hearts, and guide you by his Spirit, and frame you according to his will? Do you not account his commands holy, juſt, and good? And do you not deſire ſtrength from him your head to obey them, and to conquer all temptations from within and without that would draw you aſide? Do you not believe the promiſes which he hath made, and the threatnings which he hath denounc'd to be certainly true? And do you not deſire more, that you may have a ſhare in theſe promiſes, than enjoy any created good? And do you not fear his threatned wrath, more than any outward ſufferings? Is it thus with you, as I am confident it is, and yet will you cry out that you cannot believe? What can you not believe? Why, alas! you cannot believe you ſhall ever be ſav'd by Jeſus Chriſt. Is that it then which your belief only ſticks at? But ſuppoſe it does, you are not therefore preſently Unbelievers in Scripture-ſtile, or in God's account. For this is not that which is ſo much preſt upon you: Obſerve well the language of the Goſpel, which runs thus, *Believe in Chriſt, and you ſhall be ſaved*, not *believe that thou ſhalt be ſaved by Chriſt*. This abſolute perſwaſion of thy own ſalvation is not ſo much enjoyned thee, however not in the firſt place, but rather thy acceptance of Chriſt, that thou mayſt be ſaved by him. And yet methinks, if thou weigh things well, thou mayſt be rais'd to ſuch well gounded hopes of thy own particular happineſs, as may very much conquer theſe doubtings and fears, which thou complaineſt of under the name of unbelief. For let me ask thee ſeriouſly, why is it thou canſt not believe thou ſhalt be ſaved by Chriſt? Is it not, I know, becauſe thou doubteſt of his ſufficiency of his ſatisfaction, or of the truth of his promiſes, or the graciouſneſs of his nature. For art thou not fully perſwaded, that he will ſave all thoſe who truly believe in him? I make no doubt but thou art: Wherefore hence it is plain, that thy fears of periſhing ariſe from an opinion, that thou art not a true Believer. But this from thy own acknowledgment, I have made evident that thou art, whilſt thou believeſt that Chriſt is the only Saviour of mankind, and art as willing he ſhould take away thy ſins from thee, as prevent wrath from falling upon thee. So that it is rather for want of a clear knowledge of thy ſelf, than for want of faith in the promiſes, that thou canſt ſo hardly believe thou ſhalt be ſaved. Wherefore once again I ask thee, art

thou

thou not willing, that Christ ſhould deliver thee, both from the dominion and condemnation of ſin? If thou art, and wilt ſhew it, by uſing the means he hath afforded for this end, then be aſſured, thou art a true believer, and as ſuch ſhalt be own'd and crown'd by the Lord that bought thee. And therefore with great alacrity come along with thy fellows, to the thankful remembrance of that *eternal redemption obtain'd for you by the blood* which ratified the *everlaſting Covenant* betwixt God and his people.

2. Whatever your weakneſſes, corruptions, temptations are, let them not detain you from; but rather ſend you with more ſpeed to this Ordinance: For you know not but that may be the means, which God will bleſs for the removal of them. And take this for a certain truth, whilſt you have no ſin, but what is the burden of your Souls, and which you labour and long to be freed from, you have no ſin that makes you unfit for the Sacrament: Nay more, this your ſenſe of ſin makes you rightly fitted for it. And then there is leſs ground of doubt, as to the fears and ſadneſs you may labour under, or any temptations with which you are troubled: You cannot ſure be ſo weak, as to think your ſelves upon any of theſe accounts unmeet for your Lord's Table: For you muſt remember, he never made this the qualification of his Gueſts, that they ſhould come wanting nothing; but he calls hither the the neceſſitous to ſupply their wants. You come not hither only to be thankful for what you have received, but to receive farther what your Souls ſtand in need of. You would think he argued at a very ſilly rate that ſhould tell you, you muſt not go to a feaſt till your hunger was ſatisfied, nor come to the fire, till you are warm: And yet no better is the Sophiſtry of Satan, whereby he would perſwade you, that whilſt you feel ſo many imperfections cleave to you, and lie under ſuch great doubtings, you muſt ſtay away from the Sacrament; when as this is one means appointed by God for your relief: Here's both Phyſick and Food adminiſtred to the ſick and fainting. And God may take this ſeaſon of revealing himſelf to you and ſatisfying thoſe doubts which you could no other way get rid of. Thus hath it been with many a Soul, why may it not be ſo with you alſo?

3. Pray tell me, notwithſtanding all theſe faults which you find with your ſelves, yet do you not hold on in the

performance of other duties? To inſtance in one, do you not uſe to pray conſtantly? If you do, why then will you not be brought to this work alſo? For aſſure your ſelves, if you be ſuch whoſe Prayers are acceptable to God, your receiving will be acceptable alſo. Without a dependance upon Chriſt the Mediator, and a reſolution to conform your ſelves to the will of God, your very Prayers will be loathſome; but if theſe things be in you, all your ſervices will be well-pleaſing to him. Wherefore beware of pretending ſo much reverence for this Ordinance, and ſo much neceſſity for preparation, that leſt you ſhould not demean your ſelves as you ought, you will wholly neglect it: For ſure you cannot think this according to your Maſters will, that you ſhould run away from your work, for fear of miſcarrying in it. Nor pretend that this is of a nature ſo much different from all other duties, that whilſt you may do *them*, you may not be admitted to *this*, ſince, if you be ſincere and hearty in one as well as another, endeavouring to improve them to the end for which they were appointed, even to get nearer to God thereby, be ſure you ſhall be accepted in all. Moreover bethink your ſelves what you would have done, had you liv'd in the firſt ages of the Church, when the Chriſtians were wont for the moſt part, at every time of their aſſembling, to have a Sacrament. Would you then have ordinarily withdrawn from them? Or would you not rather have contented your ſelves with that meaſure of preparation, that you had then been capable of making? Though think not that I am all this while encouraging you to lazineſs, or to ruſh heedleſly and inconſiderately hereupon: no, be as diligent as ever you are able, to prepare your ſelves for ſo near an approach to the great God, but yet be not ſo over-ſcrupulous as to keep back from the Ordinance, or make your coming leſs profitable, through exceſſive fears. And remember ſtill, *that the habitual devotedneſs of the Soul to God expreſs'd in conſtant holineſs of life, is the beſt Qualification for this and every other performance.*

4. Laſtly, one would think you of all perſons ſhould not be guilty of refuſing your preſence here, where there is a commemoration made of the love of your deareſt Lord. I ſpeak to you that are ſerious Chriſtians; well may others ſlight this duty, if you that lie under ſo great engagements to it, will be kept back by any ordinary Pre-

tences. You are such that are somewhat acquainted with the greatness of that mercy, manifested in the Redemption of the World, and will *you* be easily detained from *shewing forth that death*, which procured it? You are persons tender of your Master's honour, and sensible of your own duty: Shew then that you are so, by obeying his command, and preserving the esteem due to his Sacred Ordinances, by your constant reverent attending upon them

Others there are, that may complain of their unfitness, who find themselves at a loss in their preparations for this duty, which yet they are very willing to set about, and are desirous of instructions for their right performance of it. For these especially I have reserved some Directions, to which I shall come presently.

But there are a third sort, those the worst, and, I fear, the most, who will confess they are unfit for the Sacrament, and therefore will by no means be drawn to it, but will tell you, though they are not fit now, yet hereafter they hope they shall be; whilst in the mean time there are no signs of any preparation they make: For come to them one Month or Year after another, still they are in the same posture, and use the same excuses. Now the very plain case of these persons, I take to be this; So much knowledge they have, that they are convinc'd no man ought to come to the Sacrament, who is not firmly resolved to forsake his sins, and to become a new man, if before he have been a careless liver; and yet their Consciences tell them, that such and such sins they are guilty of, which they cannot endure to think of parting with, and such and such duties they believe they ought to set upon, which yet they have no mind to; and therefore so much Modesty they have, that they will not come to bind themselves, to that which they are not resolved to do; and this while they fancy to themselves, that their case is something better, than if they should go and make promises of amendment, and soon after break them; and are apt to conceit, that they may as yet safely take somewhat more leberty, than will be lawful for them, when once they have taken the Sacrament, whereby they imagine they should be strangely hampered, and tied to a strictness which they have no liking to: But yet hereafter, when they have tasted a little more of the pleasures of the world,

they

they intend to betake themſelves to ſuch a courſe, and then they'll be conſtant at Sacraments, and as devout as may be, this they promiſe to themſelves. I dare appeal to the Conſciences of many, whether ſuch as theſe have not been their thoughts. Reader, have they not been thy own? And commonly it is either tippling or wantonneſs, or love to an idle and jolly life, and a liſtleſneſs to all pains and diligence in Spiritual Affairs, and a miſapprehenſion of ſerious holineſs, as if it was a moſt troubleſome rigid thing, that are the ordinary cauſes of theſe, and moſt mens continuance at a diſtance from godlineſs, and make them ſo backward to devote themſelves entirely to God. Now theſe I confeſs are not to be called immediately to the Sacrament, but ſeriouſly to be dealt with in order to their recovery, from thoſe ſenſual inclinations, and wretched deluſions, which render them ſo unfit for, and averſe from it; to which purpoſe ſerve the former exhortations to Repentance and Faith, whereon I ſtaid ſo long. Only I ſhall here diſcover to them two dangerous miſtakes, wherewith they ſeem willing to impoſe upon themſelves, and which chiefly hinder the performance of their duty.

The firſt is, a conceit that they may take ſome kind of liberty, for a loſe converſation, before they have bound themſelves to the contrary by the Sacrament, which thereupon they are much more backward to.

Now firſt I ſhall grant, that hereby a farther obligation is laid upon them, to the greateſt watchfulneſs againſt ſin, and to a faithful diſcharge of their duty to God, in the whole of their lives: And the wilful violation of ſolemn engagements renders ſin much more hainous: Wherefore it hath been my care all along to make you underſtand, that it is not ſo much the bare Receiving that I would perſwade you to, as to get your ſouls into a fitneſs for the work, and to do it in a right manner. And once again let me warn you, as you love your Souls, not to come hither in love with your ſins, or without reſolutions to turn from every evil way. Be it known to you, *God will be ſanctified in thoſe that draw near him*, and will ſeverely puniſh irreverence and profane rudeneſs, in thoſe that pretend to this ſolemn worſhip and ſervice, as you may ſee in that terrible inſtance of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, Lev. 10. 1, 2, 3. And for unworthy receiving of the Lord's Supper,

the

the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians*, *For this very cauſe many are weak and ſickly amongſt them, and many faln aſleep*; and becauſe they would not judge themſelves, therefore God judged them, 1 *Cor.* 11. 30, 31. He's an holy God, and commands all thoſe to be holy, that hope for acceptance in their approaches to him. And he's a God that ſearches the heart, ſo that there's no hope of deceiving him. Wherefore ſtand off, all you that have deſign'd to perſiſt one Month or Week longer in your rebellions againſt the Soveraign Majeſty. Dare not to offer ſo great an affront to him, as to thruſt in among his Subjects, whilſt thou art a reſolved Traitor, as if thou would'ſt make a tryal, whether he could diſcern thee in that croud. He's a jealous God, and will not endure to be ſo tempted; and ſooner or later be ſure thy Sin ſhall find thee out. If then thou diſlikeſt the holy Laws and Government of Chriſt, take not an Oath in a mockery, that thou wilt be ſubject to him, which before-hand thou intendeſt not to keep. Here's no jeſting or dallying. Beware how thou playeſt with edg-tools. Theſe are ſerious things, wherefore either be ſerious and ſincere in thy medling with them, or keep at a diſtance. Avoid, I ſay, all you loathſome defiled ſinners, that are in love with your filth, and will not be waſhed and cleanſed; whilſt this is your poſture, you are no way fit to ſit at the Table of the King of Glory, there to feaſt with his beloved Friends, whom he hath purified and made meet for his fellowſhip and favour.

But perhaps you'll preſently reply, you like all this well enough, this is that you would have, and you agree with me to ſtay away, as perceiving your own unfitneſs. And are you indeed reſolved to ſtay away, and to continue in this unprepared poſture, as thinking you have hereby ſome more diſpenſation for a careleſs ungodly life than others have? Alas! Poor wretches, how willing you are to be cheated into miſery? and how deſirous do you ſeem of a freedom to do your ſelves the greateſt miſcheif? But a little to undeceive you, let me aſſure all you that live upon this Earth, and are endued with reaſon, whether you will bind your ſelves to God by this Sacrament or not; there lie ſo many other indiſpenſable engagements on you to his Service, that you have not the leaſt liberty more than others to rebel againſt him: And that will ſufficiently appear, if you do but conſider theſe two things

1. *The*

1. *The relation wherein you naturally and neceſſarily ſtand to God.*

2. *Your more expreſs and profeſt obligation to him.*

For the firſt, Conſider, Are you not his creatures and he your maker? And is not he the upholder of your being, the lengthner of your lives, and the giver of all your mercies? Is he not therefore your Owner and Governour? Do you not owe your ſelves, and all you have, to him? And is it not your duty to ſerve and obey him, whether you have promiſed you will do ſo or not? Do you think he hath no title to you, till in ſome ſolemn manner you have profeſt ſubjection to him? Do you think the ſervice you owe to God, is ſo purely a free-will offering, that if you *will* render it you may, and if not, you are in no fault? By this reaſon God muſt be much beholden to you for it. What, do not his Laws bind, till you have given your conſent? Muſt he ask you leave to govern you? Do you think it is with you in this caſe, as with a Servant that ows this man or that no duty, till he hath hired himſelf into his Service? Sure you cannot be ſo ſtupid. But rather will you not yield that from your very birth you are at leaſt as much obliged to obedience to your Maker, as any Child to his Parent? And pray tell me, what would you think of that Child, who, when his Father bid him do any thing, ſhould ſtubbornly refuſe, and tell him he never promiſed him any ſuch obedience? Would you think this a ſatisfactory anſwer? do you not eaſily perceive, that Children are bound to obey their Parents, even by virtue of that relation they ſtand in to them, though they never enter into any formal engagement to be dutiful? Even thus do you ſtand abſolutely bound to obey God, the *Father of Spirits*, before ever you profeſs your ſelves to be his people: And all your profeſſions, though they are as ſo many farther ties upon you to obedience, yet they give not God any new right to you which before he had not, only hereby you acknowledge his right and promiſe to render him what is his due. Hence then you may ſee what an abſurd conceit it is, that you may any whit more freely ſin againſt God before you have taken the Sacrament, than after. Can you be ſo ſottiſh, as to imagine, that ſuch excuſes as theſe will ſerve your turn at that day, when you muſt be called to render a reaſon of your doing? When the Goſpel firſt came to the Heathens, I hope you'll

you'll grant they were bound to receive it, and yet they had never before given their consent to be rul'd by Christ, nor had made any Covenant with him. But why stand I so long on a case so plain?

And then take notice farther: That by virtue of this subjection which you owe to God as his creatures, you are bound to express your resolutions to serve him, by what signs, and in what manner he shall appoint you; now he hath commanded you, to express these resolutions by receiving the Lords Supper, as I have before proved: And will you disobey this particular command, and then think, this will excuse you from obedience to the rest? To make the case plain by a like instance: Suppose when the King had commanded all his Subjects to repair to several places in the Kingdom, there to take the Oath of Allegiance, many amongst them should absent themselves, and refuse to take it, and afterwards should conspire together, and rise up in arms against him, do you think it would excuse them, to plead that they never swore Allegiance to him? Why first it was their fault that they did not, since they were commanded to do it; and then however they were engaged to peace and faithfulness by living in the Kingdom, and receiving protection from their Prince. Even thus will your neglect of Sacraments be charged on you as a fault, for which you had no reason, but will be far from being admitted as an excuse of any other sins, against which you were sufficiently tied, by your living meerly upon God, and receiving all you had from him.

But then in the second place consider, *you are already obliged by your own promises and professions, to walk in the fear of the Lord*, and therefore have not the least ground to allow your selves in sin, from your not having received the Lords Supper as an engagement against it. For bethink you a little, do you not profess your selves to be Christians? And what's the meaning of that, but that you worship God by Jesus Christ, and acknowledge him to be your Maker and Ruler, and Christ to be your Saviour? And accordingly, are you not devoted to God by Baptism, whereby you stand bound to renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, and to be Christ's faithful Servants to your lives end? I confess you were thus consecrated to

God

God by your Parents in your infancy, when, according to the Law of God, and Nature, they had full power thus to diſpoſe of you: But now you are come to years of diſcretion, do you conſent to what they have done or not? In plain Engliſh do you renounce your Baptiſm, whereby you ſtand obliged to be the Servants of God and his Son Chriſt Jeſus? You that I am now ſpeaking to, will, I know, deny this with great earneſtneſs, and cry God forbid that you ſhould be ſuch Apoſtate wretches, from Chriſtians to turn Heathens and Infidels. Well then, if you acknowledge your ſelves under the bond of your Baptiſm, aſſure your ſelves, you are hereby as much tied from the leaſt ſin in thought, word, or deed, as you can be by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What will you do then in this caſe? will you dare to run on in thoſe ſins from which your Baptiſm doth bind you, and ſo renounce it in your practice, whilſt you own it in profeſſion? Or will you hereafter be ſo ſilly as to abſtain from the Communion, for fear of engaging your ſelves in an holy life, to which you ſtand engag'd already by your own conſent? If you continue in this mind, it's too plain a ſign that in your hearts you diſown your Baptiſm it ſelf: And what a caſe are you in then? For let me ask you, if you had been born of Heathen Parents, and were but juſt now come to the underſtanding of the Chriſtian Religion, and were acquainted what kind of Perſons they muſt be that own'd it, would you be Baptiz'd into this Faith, and hereby profeſs your reſolutions to lead ſuch an holy life, as all Chriſtians are commanded? If you ſay you would not, hence then it follows, that you diſlike your Baptiſm, ſince if it was to be done again you would none of it. And if indeed you wiſh your ſelves, in the caſe of unbaptized Heathens now, you are really worſe than they, and ſhall be in a worſe condition ſhortly. But if you ſay, you would readily be baptized if it was yet to do, then fain would I know, why you are ſo backward to receive the Lord's Supper, wherein you do but renew the Covenant that is made at Baptiſm, acknowledging your ſelves to be true Chriſtians, and promiſing that you will remain ſo: What poſſible reaſon can you deviſe for this unwillingneſs?

Withal take notice, all you that are baptized into the name and Church of Chriſt, and do ſtand to your Baptiſm,

you

you have hereby bound your ſelves to be his faithful ſervants, to obey his commands, and to behave your ſelves in his Church, as he directs you: Now he hath commanded all Chriſtians, that are of capacity, to prepare themſelves, and ſo to receive the Sacrament of his Supper: Do you not clearly perceive then, how your Baptiſm binds you to this Duty, you being now come to the uſe of your reaſon? How is it then that you dare neglect it, whilſt you are ſo ſtraitly engag'd to it?

And further, beſide your own Baptiſm, every time you bring Children to be baptized, you profeſs before God and the Congregation, that you renounce the Devil, the World, and the ſinful luſts of the fleſh, that you believe the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and will keep Gods holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of your life. And are you ſincere in all this? If you are, why ſhould you ſtay away from the Sacrament, where you are required to profeſs and promiſe no more? However, I hope, hence you may be convinc'd, that before you partake of the Lord's Supper, you are ſo far bound to an holy life, that you have no allowance for the leaſt ſin, any more than you have afterward, which is that I am proving.

And this is farther evident by all other duties of Religion, which you perform to God, every one of which ties you to the moſt exact obedience to him. I ſuppoſe you are not ſo Atheiſtical, but that ſometimes you pray to God; and when you pray, do you not beg of him pardon of ſin, and grace to do him faithful ſervice? When you ſay the Lords Prayer, do you not therein beſeech God to forgive you your treſpaſſes, and not to lead you into temptation, but deliver you from evil? And what, dare you ask of him forgiveneſs of Sin, whilſt you are reſolved to continue in it ſtill? I preſume you hope to obtain what you ask, and can you ſo much as flatter your ſelves with any hope that God will pardon your ſins whilſt you will not forſake them? Hath not his word plainly told you the contrary? And when you pray to be kept from ſin and the power of Satan, is it not to be ſuppos'd that you deſire theſe things? and doth not the expreſſion of your deſires engage you to do what you can to obtain what you pray for? and are you not therefore bound to take heed

of

of ſin, to watch againſt and reſiſt temptations? except you take God for an Idol, and make your prayers in a mockery, as if your Servant ſhould come and entreat you to help him do his work, and then run away, and never ſet his hand to't; or as if your Child ſhould pray you to keep him from falling into the water, and ſhould throw himſelf into it as ſoon as he had done. Dare you venture thus to play and dally with the Almighty? And when you deſire him to ſave your ſouls, and keep you from Hell, it ſpeaks you reſolv'd not willfully to deſtroy and damn your ſelves, or elſe you are horrid mockers of God. Methinks you ſhould never have the impudence to come near to him, or ſpeak a word to him, whilſt you are fully bent to go on in thoſe ways that are ſo contrary and provoking to him. The like I might ſay of hearing the word, you are thereby engaged to give obedience to it: for you cannot think ſure you ſerve God ſufficiently by hearing your duty, whilſt you ſet not about it. And for you to come to hear what God ſhall ſay by his Miniſter, with a ſecret purpoſe to hold on in ſuch and ſuch courſes, whatever ſhall be told you to the contrary, is little leſs dangerous and damnable, than to come to the Sacrament with ſuch wicked purpoſes. Let this then ſuffice to remove your firſt miſtake, that you may take liberty in ſome ſinful ways you have a mind to before you have taken the Sacrament.

The ſecond groſs miſtake which I find in your objection, is, that you think, though at preſent you have no great mind to be ſo ſerious, as to ſet upon preparation for the Sacrament, yet that hereafter you ſhall, when you have had your ſwinge a while longer, and have taken a little more pleaſure, being as yet perhaps but in the time of your youth, and thereupon you hope that God will bear with you yet a while, ſince you have ſuch good purpoſes to become his Servants for the time to come.

Should I go about fully to ſhew you the vanity of this conceit, and your folly in delaying to return to God, I might fill many ſheets; wherefore that I may not be tedious, I ſhall do little more than repreſent to you the very true language and importance of this pretence of yours, that ſo you may be aſhamed of ever uſing it more, or harbouring it any longer. When you talk of ſtaying yet awhile,

awhile, before you caſt off your old companions and courſes, and bind your ſelves to a godly life at the Sacrament, what do you in effect but ſay? That when you have contemn'd Gods mercy, and griev'd his Spirit a little longer, and done ſomewhat more to diſhonour his name, then you will betake your ſelves to him, and become his people; when you have done Satan yet a little more Service, then you'll ſhake him off, and take Chriſt for your Maſter? when you have a while longer trod under foot his precious blood, then it ſhall waſh you from all your ſins; when you have run deeper on the ſcore, and added ſomething more both to the number and hainouſneſs of your tranſgreſſions, then you'll come for a pardon; when you have done ſomewhat more to make God your enemy, then you'll ſeek reconciliation; when you have let your luſts take deeper rooting, then you'll pluck them up; when you have made them a little ſtronger, then you'll ſubdue them; when the ſore is feſtered, then you'll apply the plaiſter; when the gangreen is almoſt got to your vitals, then you'll ſeek a remedy? Thus fooliſhly, thus preſumptuouſly and baſely do they argue, who think it too ſoon yet to come home to God, and be religious in good earneſt. I know you would be aſham'd to ſpeak thus, and would ſcarce be perſwaded there lodges ſo much wickedneſs in your hearts, but for certain there does, whil'ſt you retain ſecret purpoſes to go on in a way of known ſin. Ah poor ſinner! That thou didſt but a little know what thou doeſt, whilſt thou ſtandſt thus unreſolved whether thou ſhouldeſt yet bid farewell to thy luſts, and come over heartily to God by Jeſus Chriſt. Oh diſingenuous creature! doſt thou think thou haſt not provok't and diſhonour'd thy Maker enough *yet*? Haſt thou not *yet* ſufficiently abuſed thy Redeemers grace and patience? Haſt thou not *yet* thrown away time enough? And ſinn'd mercies and offers enough? Is ſin ſo ſweet and profitable a thing that it ſhould be ſo hard to determine whether it was beſt to be forſaken or not? Is God ſo hard a Maſter, and his ſervice ſuch a burdenſom thing, that ſinners muſt be wooed to him with ſo much earneſtneſs, and all prove too little with the moſt? Is it ſo ſafe and deſirable a ſtate to remain ſtill in the gall of bitterneſs and under the wrath of God? Can you keep off this wrath which you are plucking upon you? Have you both repentance and time

at your own beck? And are you ſure of repentance, how long ſo ever you ſtay, before you ſeek it? will holineſs be good for you hereafter, and is it not now? Or are you afraid of being happy too ſoon? Wherefore weigh things well, Sirs, and then reſolve whether there be any wiſdom, in delaying that work which may be put off too long; but cannot be too quickly done: that work to which in all reaſon and conſcience you ſtand engaged every hour, even to be divorc'd from ſin and Satan, and firmly betrothed to the Lord Jeſus. How long muſt he ſeek and ſue for thy conſent? Why ſhould he not have thy youth as well as any other? Doth Satan deſerve it better than he? Did not he die for thee in the prime of his years, and why ſhould'ſt not thou live to him whilſt thou art young? When wilt thou have put away that wretched diſobedient anſwer, that it's yet *too ſoon* to entertain him? Hath he ſtood knocking for entrance till his locks are wet with the dew of the night, and is it ſtill *too ſoon* to open to him and let him in? Oh beware, leſt thy continued ſtubbornneſs ſhould even wear out his patience; leſt thy perverſe carriage ſhould provoke him for ever to leave thee; and leſt if ſtill thou think'ſt it not *time* yet to break off thy ſins, and ſet upon a godly life, he ſhould think it *time* to cut thee off, and ſentence thee to everlaſting death. In the mean time know, that all thy good deſigns, what thou wilt do, and be hereafter, will not be the leaſt excuſe of thy preſent wickedneſs, nor make thy caſe any better with God; nay rather, they make it worſe, ſince it appears, thou art convinced in thy Conſcience, that thou oughteſt to live after another faſhion than thou do'ſt, and yet willfully neglecteſt thy acknowledged duty. I hope then I have ſaid enough, to ſhew that thou haſt no refuge, no excuſe that will hold, whilſt thou abſenteſt thy ſelf from the Sacrament, out of a lothneſs as yet to reform thy life, and do the duties to which this would bind thee. Wherefore to conclude, If it be thy purpoſe to continue in any ſinful courſe, come to the Lords Table if thou dareſt: for far be it from me to ſpeak one word to encourage thee to forſwear thy ſelf. But yet on the other hand, Go on in thy ſin and ſtay away, if thou dareſt: For thou art in danger every moment of dropping into Hell, whilſt thou remaineſt in ſuch a ſtate. Thou ſeeſt then to what a ſtrait ſin brings thee, ſo that

turn

turn thee which way thou wilt, whilſt thou willingly carrieſt it about thee, an Angel with a flaming ſword ſtands full in thy way, threatning deſtruction; whether thou comeſt or comeſt not, whilſt thou continueſt a reſolved ſinner, thy caſe is ſad and deplorable. But yet one way remains, and but one that I know for thy ſafety, even with all ſpeed to caſt away thy ſins, and change thy heart and life: And then come as ſoon as thou wilt to the Lords Table, there to profeſs this bleſſed change, and to confirm thy ſelf therein. And for thy encouragement take notice of two things..

1. *It is not an abſolute ſinleſs perfection that here thou bindeſt thy ſelf to*; even this thou ſhould'ſt thirſt and aſpire after, but yet thou art not to be diſcouraged, if thou never attain it, till thou art taken into the number of *the Spirits of juſt men made perfect*. Miſtake me not, as if I was indulging thee an allowance in any the leaſt ſin; no, this is it I warn thee of, and againſt this thou muſt covenant in the Sacrament, to wit, againſt a willing, loving entertainment of any ſin whatever. And thou ſhalt be accounted true to this Covenant, if thou hate and ſtrive againſt all, and art humbled under the ſenſe of thy remaining imperfections, being far more deſirous to be rid of them, than to retain them: And if upon knowledge of any ſlip or ſtumble thou riſeſt again by true repentance, and recourſe to the blood of Chriſt for mercy, and to his Spirit for freſh ſtrength, being reſolved to take more heed to thy ways for the time to come. It is here as if thou ſhould'ſt promiſe thy Phyſician, thou would'ſt be careful of thy health; this doth not imply, that thou wilt never be ſick more, but yet it implies thus much, that thou wilt not wilfully bring diſeaſes upon thy ſelf, but wilt uſe the means that are appointed to preſerve thy health; and whatever ſickneſs cleaves to thee will be thy trouble, and thou wilt deſire and endeavour to be freed from it. Even thus art thou bound to regard the health of thy ſoul, and to look upon ſin as a ſpiritual ſickneſs, and therefore never to fall in love with it, but do thy beſt towards its utter removal: Even thoſe infirmities, to which the beſt are liable, are not to be cheriſht and pleaded for, no more than thou wouldſt plead for the keeping of a little head-ach, or any bodily pain. Thou ſhould'ſt not by thy good will be guilty ſo much

as of a vain thought, an idle word, or the leaſt motion to any ſin; but yet it is not required of thee, to promiſe abſolutely never more to be guilty of any of theſe; nor art thou to judge thy ſelf unfit for the Sacrament, becauſe thou find'ſt ſuch imperfections cleave to thee, ſo long as from thy heart thou abhorreſt them, and do'ſt ordinarily overcome all temptations to more groſs and wilful ſins. Whilſt thou art in the fleſh, thy ſtate is like to be ſo far imperfect, that it will be thy daily duty *to grow in grace*, and to pray for the *forgiveneſs of thy treſpaſſes*; to improve Chriſt, both as a treaſury of grace whence thou art to be ſupplied, and as an advocate with the father, through whom thou may'ſt be pardoned. This I mention, that thou may'ſt not ſay, I diſcourage thee from the Sacrament, by making it an engagement to greater ſtrictneſs, than it's poſſible for man in this life to come up to, ſince I do aſſure thee thou mayſt ſafely come hither, if thou art but ſincerely reſolved to do what in thee lies to pleaſe God, and not to run wilfully into thoſe actions, which thou know'ſt are contrary to his will. And this alſo may take away that fond opinion of ſome ignorant people, *that it's beſt never to receive the Sacrament, till they come to their death-bed*, as thinking that every ſin afterward will damn them; but remember what I have told you, that we do not promiſe never to ſin more, but not to allow our ſelves in ſin; and to this ſincere endeavour to keep all Gods commands, we are before as ſtrictly tied by our Baptiſm, and therefore by your reaſon reaſon this ſhould be deferred till we come to die, as ſome of the Ancients did, partly through this miſtake, and thinking this waſht away all the ſins before committed. And if you ſhould be of this opinion alſo, that the Sacrament gives you a pardon of all your former ſins, and therefore its good to put it off to your death-bed, conſider well, that it's by vertue of Gods promiſes that you have any ground to expect pardon of ſin; and by thoſe promiſes, to which the Sacraments are ſeals, this pardon is aſſured to all penitent believing ones; ſo that Baptiſm and the Lords Supper do ſeal your pardon, even of ſins that may hereafter be committed; if you truly repent of them, and betake your ſelves to Gods mercy in Chriſt for forgiveneſs: But if you think, when you have liv'd an ungodly life, to make up all by taking the Sacrament when

you

you are ſick, know, to your timely conviction, this will not do the work, as you ſhall know to your terrour, if you depend upon't: for remember what I told you, that if you do not truly repent of ſin, it is not the Sacrament that will give you a pardon, and this true repentance few upon a death-bed have, that put it off till then. Moreover, you that are for deferring this duty till you come to die, I might ask you how you know whether you ſhall not die ſuddenly, or have the uſe of your reaſon taken away by your diſtemper, or be viſited with the Plague, that no Miniſter dare come near you? And farther, you ſeem not to conſider, that this Ordinance is exceeding helpful to us, for the overcoming of luſts, and leading our lives as we ought; and this brings me to the ſecond thing which I would have you take notice of.

2. Namely, That if thou art but once come up to a reſolution, to do thy beſt againſt ſin, and to pleaſe God, and addreſſeſt thy ſelf to the Lords Supper, with an earneſt deſire of grace to be here given thee from Chriſt, to enable thee to perform thy promiſes, thou maiſt very confidently expect ſtrength and aſſiſtance from him, and even now to partake thereof. Little do'ſt thou think what a mighty blow thou mighteſt give to thy ſtrong luſts, and to the Kingdom of Satan within thee, by ſuch a firm reſolution as this, made with an humble dependance upon Gods Grace, bound upon, and confirmed by taking the Sacrament. Oh! If thou waſt but brought into ſo ingenuous and good a frame, as to be truly grieved, that Sin and Satan ſhould have ſo much intereſt in thee, and didſt heartily deſire, that God would caſt them forth, and take poſſeſſion of thee for himſelf, in how good a way waſt thou then to a deliverance? If God ſaw thee labouring under the burden of thy luſts, tugging with thy backward heart, to bring it to him, thou canſt not imagine what help he would ſoon afford thee. Wherefore ſit not down in a faint dejection; ſay not, *there is no hope of ever getting up ſuch ſtrong luſts, which are ſo deep rooted in my nature, and ſo confirmed by long cuſtom, it's to no purpoſe to attempt it.* Why man, muſt not this work be done, or thou periſh for ever? And the longer it's delaid, the harder it's like to be. Thy caſe is ſad indeed, but not deſperate yet; Let neither thy preſumption, nor deſpondency make it deſperate. *The things that are impoſſible with*

men, are poſſible with God. Wherefore rouze thy ſelf, and gather up all thy ſtrength: for be ſure, ſitting ſtill will bring thy death. Limit not Gods power, but ask thy own heart, whether thou art willing to be cured: For no diſeaſes are too hard for the Phyſician that will take thee in hand. If thou wilt but attend upon him, and humbly beg, and accept his help, oh how ſoon can he bring down all high imaginations, and every thought that rebels againſt him, and ſubdue all things to himſelf! He hath healed and cleanſed as vile ſinners as thou, and conquered as ſtubborn hearts as thine. He can ſo change thy nature, and the very temper and bent of thy ſoul, that thou ſhalt abhor thoſe ſins which thou now think'ſt thou canſt not live without, ſo that thou wilt chuſe rather to be torn limb from limb, or to take Toads and Serpents into thy boſome, than to meddle with what was once ſo pleaſant; and wilt wonder that ever thou ſhould'ſt be ſuch a Beaſt, ſuch a Devil, as to take delight in that which was ſo hurtful to thy ſelf, and ſo diſpleaſing to God. Oh let not then the ſeeming ſweetneſs of any luſt bewitch thee any longer, or betray thee into a ſlothful neglect of thy duty: If ſin would have made thee happy, thou hadſt found it long ſince, and yet what haſt thou ever got from it, that comforts thee to look back upon it? Or that would do thee any good, if thou waſt to die at this hour? And put it on thy account, nothing better wilt thou get at laſt. But little do'ſt thou think what thou loſeſt one year after another whilſt thou remaineſt eſtranged from God, and think'ſt it an holy life ſuch a tedious difficult thing. Be perſwaded then at length to make tryal, and ſee what can be done in the caſe. Bind thy ſelf by the moſt ſolemn vow to forſake thy wicked wayes, and to become Gods faithful ſervant, and come to the Sacrament with this deſign; and if thou be ſincere, thou maiſt be confident of receiving help from God, to keep his Covenant, which, by his Word and Spirit, thou art drawn to make with him. So much for the third objection.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Obj. *We are not in perfect charity, but at variance with our Neighbours, Answered.*

4. *Obj.* THE fourth and last that I shall take notice of, is very common in the mouths of many, to wit, *That they are at variance with their neighbours, and therefore cannot with good Conscience come to the Communion, whither none are to come, but they that are in perfect charity with all men*; and commonly they alledg, that they have Law-suits, or some kind of quarrellings one with another.

Ans. In answer hereto, let me ask you, who put this objection, whose fault is it, that you are no at peace with your neighbours? I question not but you'll presently tell me, that the fault is theirs. But then farther, have you no enmity in your minds against them? But are you willing to be reconciled to them, and to do what on your part may conduce thereto? And though they be cross and perverse, yet do you from your heart forgive them? so that you would not take revenge on them, if it were in your power, but would do them good if they should need your help? It's very like you'll be ready to reply, that you are thus well-affected toward them, and that the malice is only on their part: And for the present I shall suppose you speak true; where-upon I demand, whether you can be so weak, as to think that another mans sin, shall be laid to your charge? If your neighbour be malicious, is that any fault of yours? Or doth his malice make you any more unfit for the Sacrament, than his drunkenness or covetousness? What a sad case might the best Christian be in, if it was in the power of every wicked man, that owes him a spite, to make it unlawful for him to go to the Sacrament? as by your arguing it would be. Suppose any malicious man should without reason pick a quarrel with me, and after I have used all means to pacifie him, he should utterly refuse to be at peace, what's to be done in this case? Must I stay away from the Sacrament till I can perswade him to be friends with me? perhaps that may never be, and must I be bound to a thing

impoſſible? or be ſo great a loſer through another Mans wickedneſs, which I cannot help? Is it not enough for me to be reconcil'd to him in my own mind, and freely to forgive him what injuries he hath done me? how elſe would thoſe bleſſed Saints in the Primitive times have done, whilſt they were maligned and perſecuted by almoſt all Men? we never find that they made this any pretence to keep away from the Lords Table, at which they did ſo frequently attend. They thought themſelves guiltleſs (as well they might) whilſt they prayed for their Perſecutors, bleſt them that curſt them, not avenging themſelves, but giving place unto wrath, and not giving to any man juſt cauſe of offence. And do you but labour thus to behave your ſelves, and then never trouble your minds with other mens enmity againſt you.. Yea, do but thus, and you will fully anſwer the command God hath given us, to live in peace and quietneſs, *Rom.* 12. 18. *If it be poſſible, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men.* Which words plainly inſinuate, that it is not always poſſible to have the good will of all Men, but yet we muſt labour for this, and do nothing that may hinder it, and therefore above all muſt not bear or diſcover ill will to them.

But here perhaps ſome will reply, that they are forc't to vindicate their wrongs, and to go to Law with thoſe that would abuſe them, or that ſue them without cauſe, and therefore can they with a ſafe conſcience receive the Sacrament before the contention is ended? Why, to this you muſt even ask your own hearts for an anſwer. For (as I ſaid before) if you all this while have no malicious deſign againſt them, but ſeek only to defend or right your ſelves in a juſt and lawful manner, there's nothing that need trouble you in this caſe. For in the thing it ſelf, it's not a ſin to go to Law, if the cauſe and deſign be good, no more than it was for the *Jews* to appeal to their Judges, to determine matters betwixt man and man. And therefore when the Apoſtle condemns the Chriſtians, for going to Law one with another, before the Heathen Judges, which made it *utterly a fault*, he yet adviſeth them to ſet ſome in the Church to judge betwixt the brethren, in controverſies that might happen touching their worldly concernments, 1 *Cor.* 6. 4, 5. And theſe ſuits may poſſibly be lawful on both ſides, as when ſuch a difficult

cult caſe ſhall happen that cannot otherwiſe be decided, and then both parties might maintain charity to each other, if they were but ſuch as they ought. But if without cauſe you are vext by men of contention, beware of acting out of wrath, ſpleen or revenge; yea, or of doing any thing out of meer ſelfiſhneſs: For even in your temporal concerns, about your eſtate, credit, *&c.* Gods intereſt ſhould be more aimed at than your own; and you ſhould not ſo much endeavour to ſecure or recover theſe for your own ſake as that you may hereby be more capable, of honouring God: And if you ſaw, that through ſome circumſtances, it might tend more to Gods honour, to neglect a vindication of your right than to proſecute it, in ſuch a caſe it would be your duty to ſit ſtill. (They that have devoted themſelves, and all they have to God, will underſtand this and none elſe.) Hence you find the Apoſtle expoſtulating with the Chriſtians, why they would not take wrong, and even ſuffer themſelves to be defrauded rather than contend, whereby they did then ſo much diſgrace Religion, *Verſ* 7. of that forequoted Chapter. But yet I ſay, when it is your duty to maintain your right, againſt thoſe that would abuſe you, you may do this, and yet have no ſpight againſt their perſons, nor any deſire of their hurt, if your own hearts be right; and may really forgive them, whilſt you endeavour to avoid the injury which they would offer you. And let this ſuffice on ſuppoſition, that you are thus well-affected towards thoſe, that make themſelves your adverſaries; which if you indeed be, I hope I need uſe no more words to perſwade you, that other Mens malicious behaviour towards you, need be no hindrance to your coming to the Sacrament.

But on the other ſide, give me leave to deal plainly with you, all you that inſiſt upon this reaſon for neglecting your duty, *becauſe there's difference betwixt you and your neighbours*, I ſtrongly ſuſpect that you your ſelves are very much in fault: and indeed you confeſs as much by your practice, whilſt in your words you diſown it; for why is it you make this a ground of abſtaining from the Sacrament, but that your Conſciences tell you, you bare ſo much ill-will to your neighbours, that its a dangerous thing for you to receive it? Oh look back upon your ways, and ſee whether inſtead of bearing wrongs, you

have

have not wrong'd and defrauded others. Have you not oppreſt, or needleſly vext them, through eager deſigns of raiſing your ſelves by their ruins, not caring whom you have injured and trampled upon, ſo you might but get your own ends? Or if you will not own this, yet look faithfully into the temper of your ſouls. Do you not ſtand vilely affected towards ſome that have done you injuries, and whom you take for your enemies? Are you not backward to any thorough reconciliation with them? Do you not ſtand upon your terms; and expect that they ſhould come firſt and humble themſelves, and ſtoop to you, before you'll ſeek after any peace with them? Your great ſpirits ſcorn to be firſt in this work; nay its well if you are not reſolv'd againſt it, let them that do what they will. Oh proud wretches! Is this like Gods dealing with the World? When we had given him the offence, yet who was it began firſt to treat of a peace? Hath the great God given you this example, and yet are you *too good*, forſooth, to ſeek to your fellow creatures to be at peace with you? if this be your *goodneſs*, may not the Devil himſelf paſs for *good?* For he hath pride enough, and what's yours better? But farther, do you not cheriſh a ſacred ſpleen againſt them, which fills you with implacable deſires of being reveng'd on them, and makes you griev'd to ſee them do well in the world? whereas you could heartily wiſh their ruin, and would delight to be in a capacity of doing them a miſchief; and long to bring them under you, that you might inſult over them, and make them repent that ever they diſpleaſed ſuch as you. Oh deviliſh and monſtrous ſpirit! That ever it ſhould dwell in the breaſts of any that call themſelves Chriſtians! *Chriſtians* are they call'd? they deſerve not the name of *Men*. Certainly there are many as good Chriſtians as theſe hang'd at *Tyburn* for cutting Mens throats. For did not the fear of Man reſtrain them, you ſhould quickly ſee their envenom'd rancour break out into as bad effects. But ſuppoſe your malice be not boil'd up to ſuch an height, yet if you harbour ſo much as makes you unfit for the Sacrament (as according to your own acknowledgement you do, whilſt it keeps you from it) it's a plain ſign your ſouls are yet under miſerable diſtempers, far from being truly ſanctified; you live ſtill under the power of ſelf-love, unmortified

pride or covetouſneſs which are the ſecret cauſe of this your diſcord with others. And alaſs! though theſe preſent differences were ended, you would be far from a fitneſs for the Sacrament, whilſt you abide in the condition you are in, not having your peace made with God, but being in enmity againſt him, through a ſubjection to your reigning luſts. And therefore you might more truly ſay you are not fit for this duty, becauſe you are proud and covetous and envious, than becauſe you are at variance with any one; only you hope for ſome kind of excuſe, by laying the fault on others, but that I have taken off before. And furthermore, is it not a plain diſcovery, how little love you have to Chriſt and your own ſouls, that you can willingly be ſo long abſent from this Ordinance, upon ſuch a ſilly pretence as this, that your neighbours and you are not agreed? It's a ſign of an ill ſtomach, when people are glad of an excuſe to ſave them from eating. What, could not you, if you had been ſo minded, have got an agreement before now? Or at leaſt, could not you have done ſo much towards it, as might have ſatisfied your Conſciences, that you were not in fault? Was there but any worldly advantage to be got by doing thus much, you would ſooner ſet about it, I'll warrant you. But being, I doubt, very indifferent to Sacraments, or to any thing that concerns your ſouls, a very little reaſon ſerves to keep you from them, ſince you find no want of them, nor can imagine how you ſhould be much bettered by them. And whilſt you are in this wretched frame, beſure you ſhall never want one thing or other to hinder you. To bring you to better apprehenſions of things, let what I have ſaid before ſuffice: For I now haſten to a concluſion; only let me wiſh you to beware of cheating your ſelves with that miſtake, which I endeavoured to remove under the laſt Objection, to wit, That whilſt you come not to the Sacrament, you may ſafely perſiſt in ſuch and ſuch actions, or in ſuch a temper of mind, which ought to be changed before you go thither: For thus you ſeem to think, whilſt you ſtay away, becauſe there are fallings out betwixt you and others; being it ſeems reſolved to continue in your enmity, and think your ſelves ſecure enough, if you come not hither in this evil mind. If theſe be your thoughts, pray anſwer me theſe two things.

1. *How*

1. *How can you desire of God the forgiveneſs of your ſins whilſt you refuſe to forgive others?* Have you the impudence to do it? Or the ignorance and preſumption, to think ſuch deſires would be granted? See where the contrary is expreſly told you, in that forementioned place, *Mat.* 6. 15. Nay, tell me plainly, How dare you ſo much as ſay the Lords Prayer, wherein you beg of God to *forgive your treſpaſſes, as you forgive thoſe that treſpaſs againſt you?* What, do you pray that he would remember your iniquities, and charge them upon you, and take vengeance of you? For thus it ſeems you deal with thoſe that offend you. Or do you think to make your caſe ſomewhat the better, by never ſaying this Prayer, or by leaving out this petition? Can you imagine this will hinder God from dealing with you according to the tenour thereof? Me-thinks you ſhould not be ſo weak: No, be you ſure, God will make good his word, that if you forgive not, you ſhall not be forgiven, whether you give your conſent or not. If you ſay you do forgive your enemies, then I ask you again, why upon account of any differences you ſhould neglect the Sacrament? But if you do not forgive them, you ſee it's as dangerous to ſay your Prayers, whilſt you are in this mind, as to come to the Communion.

2. But again, If through theſe differences with your neighbours you are unfit for the Sacrament, pray bethink you well, *whether upon the ſame account you are not as unfit for death?* And dare you continue in ſuch a deſperate condition as this? Do you not believe, that the charity which is required to make you fit for the Communion of imperfect Saints here on earth, is as neceſſary for your admiſſion into the Communion of Saints in Glory? Are you not fit to go to the Lords Table? And are you then fit to appear before his tribunal? Take this for an undoubted truth, that if you ſo far allow your ſelf in malice or any other ſin, that you are (according to the Goſpel rule) unworthy of the Sacrament, if you die in this condition, you will be thought unworthy of everlaſting life. Methinks then you ſhould never dare to live in ſuch an eſtate, wherein you dare not die. You take it to be a dangerous thing to die out of charity with any, and is it ſafe think you to live out of charity, or in any other ſin, for thoſe that are liable to death every moment?

Wherefore,

Wherefore, to conclude, my advice to you is, that you would without any longer delay go to your brother, and if you have wrong'd him, acknowledge it, and make all due preparation, and do what in you lies to be reconciled to him: but if he prove obſtinate, or have wrong'd you, ſee that you heartily forgive him and clear your breaſt of all ſpight, or deſire of revenge; ſo being careful in all other reſpects duly to prepare your ſelves, to come to the Lords Table, there to receive a confirmation of peace betwixt God and your own ſoul. And thus I have done with the ſeveral objections that are made againſt this duty.

CHAP. XVI.

Directions for a due Preparation, and right Receiving.

IN the laſt place, according to my promiſe, I come to give ſome Directions to thoſe who are willing to addreſs themſelves to this work; to inſtruct them for their immediate preparation to their Behaviour in and after the ſame. And though I have already at large ſhewn what the deſign of this Ordinance is, that ſo we might the better know how to behave our ſelves thereat, and have thereby diſcovered what kind of perſons Communicants ought to be, yet I ſhall in a few words premiſe a repetition of the ſame, that you may the better apprehend and remember it.

Know then, that it pleaſed our bleſſed Lord Jeſus, in the evening of that night wherein he was betrayed, to appoint this Sacrament of his Supper, partly for the preſent comfort of his Apoſtles (who began to be caſt down upon the knowledge of his ſufferings, and removal from amongſt them) but principally for the benefit of them, and all other Chriſtians, in the times that were to follow, even till he ſhould come to Judgment, till which time it never ought to be laid down in the Church. The great end of it was (as I have ſaid) to preſerve freſh in the minds of all Chriſtians, the memory of their Lord and Maſter, and eſpecially of that unvaluable mercy ſhewn in his dying

ing for them, his Death being very clearly held forth by the breaking of the Bread, and pouring out of the Wine. But we muſt not think, that it was for an idle uneffectual Remembrance of him, that he commanded this duty, but for ſuch a Remembrance, as might tend to the great advantage of our ſouls; even that by remembring our Redemption, we might be brought to have low mean thoughts of our ſelves, who were loſt and undone, but recovered by Free grace; that we might keep up a ſenſe of the exceeding great evil of ſin, which made us liable to thoſe miſeries, whence only his Death can deliver us, and ſo might be ſtirred up to a greater ſorrow for hatred of, and reſolutions againſt ſin, the occaſion of his Death; and that by the Remembrance of his love, we might be the ſtronglier engaged to him, and here in a viſible and expreſs manner, might ſolemnize our Covenant with him, and frequently renew our promiſes of faithfulneſs. Moreover, here Chriſt hath made a familiar repreſentation of the bleſſings he hath obtained for believers, that hereby we might be quickned to earneſt deſires after them, and ſo being at preſent fitted, for the communications of grace to our ſouls, might receive the ſame; and might here alſo receive a confirmation of our faith, that we ſhall in due time enjoy thoſe priviledges that are inviſible, and yet to come. And farther, he hath ordained, that his Death ſhould in this lively manner, at ſet times be repreſented to us, that having it freſh in our thoughts, we may be the more powerfully moved at ſuch ſeaſons as theſe, to celebrate and adore that wiſdom and goodneſs, which hath ſo wonderfully appeared in the contrivance and accompliſhment of our Redemption; and that fellow-Chriſtians meeting together for this work, may be the more endeared to one another, and quickned to long after a perfect communion in the praiſes and love of God and their Redeemer, in that future glory whereof they have here a ſhadow and foretaſt.

Now as the ends for which this Ordinance was appointed inform us, what kind of perſons they that frequent it ought to be, as to their habitual qualifications, ſo do they alſo teach us, what ought to be the workings of our ſoul in our approaches to it; ſince here we are to exerciſe and put forth thoſe graces, which are before required to be wrought in us: But yet for your plainer direction, I

ſhall

ſhall tell you more particularly how you ought then to behave your ſelves; and laſtly ſhall ſhew, how you may improve it afterwards to your greateſt advantage.

But by the way take notice, that I ſuppoſe you, to whom I now ſpeak, to be ſuch as are heartily willing to come to the Sacrament in that manner, and to thoſe ends which Chriſt hath commanded: and therefore I ſuppoſe you to be already ſo far convinc't of the evil of ſin, that you are reſolved to forſake it; and ſo far convinc't of the greatneſs of thoſe benefits that come by a Saviour, and of your need of him, that you are firmly purpoſed to accept of him, as he offers himſelf to you, that you may be his, and he may be yours for ever. And upon this account, I ſhall ſay little to put you upon, or help you in that ſelf-examination, whereby you may come to the knowledge of your own Eſtates, whether you have a true work of grace wrought in your hearts or not, ſince I have before ſaid ſo much to this purpoſe; but ſhall now rather direct you, how to exerciſe and expreſs your repentance, Faith and other graces. Only as you go along, if you find your ſelves willing to perform the duties I ſhall mention, you have reaſon to believe that your condition is good; but if you refuſe theſe, you have too much ground to ſuſpect, that all is not well with you. And though it be uſual to diſtinguiſh betwixt directions for an immediate preparation to the Sacrament, and thoſe that are for a right demeanour in the act of Receiving, yet I ſhall chuſe rather to ſpeak of both under the ſame Head, ſince it hath been my buſineſs all a long, to bring ſouls to a fitneſs for this work, and ſince in our performance of the duty, our hearts ought to be kept in the ſame diſpoſition and frame that they were brought into, by our preparations for it.

1. Firſt then, I would adviſe you who intend to come to the Lords Table to ſet apart ſome convenient time, for the preparing of your ſouls for this weighty work. It is a moſt ſerious buſineſs, and ought to be ſeriouſly taken in hand: Let nothing here be done curſorily or raſhly. Not that I would have you daunted, as if it was a work of that nature, that you muſt either come trembling, or elſe ſtay away for fear: No, but only ſee you be very ſerious; for ſo you ought to be whenever you have any thing to do with God, even when you ſo much as menti-

on

on his name, or open a Bible, or come to hear his Word; and therefore being now in a more eſpecial manner to draw near to him, in a duty wherein a miſcarriage is more dangerous, it's very requiſite that you make more ſolemn preparation for it, ſince upon this, the right performance of it doth very much depend. And therefore it is, that I would have you ſet ſome time apart for that purpoſe, which will be moſt convenient in the week, or on the day before you Receive: though I would have you be imployed in this work more than once or twice. But if you are Servants, and ſo are ſtraightned of time, or through poverty are conſtrained to daily labour, you muſt watch for the fitteſt opportunities you can get. And it is no doubt, but you will find time enough, if you will but be watchful to redeem time from idleneſs, and vain ways of ſpending it. However it's better to ſpare ſome time from your working, or ſleeping, yea or eating, than to neglect thoſe works, for which you had your life it ſelf: For it's of far more conſequence, I hope, to ſave your ſouls for ever, than to keep your bodies alive a little while, though you may very well do both, if you be willing.

2. Having ſet apart ſome time, ſee that you be not only got alone, and your hands taken off your buſineſs, but let your hearts be withdrawn from off all worldly things, and ſet, as in the preſence of God, upon an employment of no ſmall conſequence; and humbly beg of God that he would vouchſafe you his preſence and aſſiſtance in theſe your preparations, and in the work you are preparing for; that he would ſet and keep your minds in a frame ſuitable thereto; and graciouſly own, accept and bleſs you, who in obedience to him have ſet upon this duty. And beg of him, that he would help you in the ſearching of your heart, and reviewing of your life, that you may not only have a ſight of ſin, but a right ſenſe of its vileneſs, that you may not only think of it, but grieve for it; and that all your meditations may be attended with ſuitable affections, and that in all, you may be ſincere and upright, that ſo upon good grounds, you may take comfort in the review of what you ſhall have done, and by this preſent opportunity may be advanc't one ſtep forward toward your eternal reſt.

3. And

3. And when you have done thus, Let your first work be, *to enter into such a serious consideration of your own estate, both by nature and practice, as may be most effectual to bring you to a sound repentance.* The reason why I advise you to this first, is, because you being now about to celebrate the remembrance of the greatest mercy that ever was manifested to mankind, wherein especially love and thankfulness are to be exercised, it is not possible you should feelingly acknowledge it as so great a mercy, if you be not very sensible of your own misery, and of that absolute need you stand in of it. Should you offer money to one, who thinks he has no great want of it, he might take it perhaps, but not with that thankfulness that another would, who is ready to starve for lack of relief. A man that perceives himself sinking and drowning, with that readiness will he lay hold on an hand that's held out to save him? Thus, the deeper sense you have of your own vileness, the more will you admire Gods goodness, in having any regard to such a worthless wretch as you. The greater you perceive your sins to be, the more need you will see of pardoning mercy, the more you will prize, and the closer will you cleave to Christ, and the more readily will you come hither to receive the seal of your pardon. The lower your humiliations are, the higher ordinarily will you rise in praise and joy. Wherefore it will be very needful, especially if this be the first time of thy receiving, or though it should not, yet I say, it will be needful, and profitable for thee to take an impartial view of thy self, what a vile and unworthy sinner thou art, that so thou maist think meanly of thy self as thou oughtest to think, and maist be sincerely humbled in the remembrance of all thy miscarriages. And for thy help herein I shall run over a few particulars.

Consider what a sinful nature thou brought'st into the World with thee, being *conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity*, and being hereby a *Child of wrath.* Think how ignorant thou art of God, how much at enmity with him naturally; how exceeding prone to all sin and how averse from goodness, as by experience thou hast sadly found, and didst soon begin to find, so that thou maist well acknowledge, *that in thy flesh dwells no good thing.* And then remember with brokenness of heart, how early thou didst set upon a trade of actual sinning, wherein thou hast

been ſo conſtant all thy days. And call to mind the ſeveral ages of thy life which thou haſt paſt through, and the particular ſins of thoſe times: The ſenſuality and pride, and all the follies of thy youth; thy miſpence of precious time in idleneſs and fooliſh ſports and paſtimes. Reflect alſo upon the ſins of thy riper years, if thou art yet come to them, ſuch commonly as Company-keeping, Drunkenneſs and Wantonneſs; or on the other hand, Covetouſneſs, over-eager following of the World, to the neglect of Gods ſervice, injuring and over-reaching your neighbours, uncharitableneſs to the poor. Call to mind alſo the places and relations you have lived in, and the ſins you were therein guilty of, as whilſt you were at home with your Parents, at School, or in Service, or any other way diſpos'd of: Think whether you were not guilty of telling lies, of diſobedience, ſlothfulneſs, and unfaithfulneſs, which are the uſual ſins of thoſe times. You will find it very profitable and affecting, to be as particular and punctual as you can in this review, as to think at ſuch a place, in ſuch company, I was guilty of ſuch and ſuch ſins. And then fetch in matter for your humiliation, by conſidering the ſeveral aggravations of your ſins, as your being devoted to God by Baptiſm, and yet revolting from him, when you came to the uſe of your reaſon; receiving all you had from him, and yet rebelling againſt him, abuſing your mercies to the diſhonour of the giver. Moreover *your* ſins are much the more hainous, who have had good education, and been brought up to hear and read the Word of God, and have been plainly told what is your duty, and yet have neglected it; who have had many a time convictions of the ſinfulneſs and danger of your courſes, and yet have gone on in them, and have had ſome purpoſes of a reformation, and yet have ſoon loſt them; or it may be under ſome pangs of conſcience, or in a fit of ſickneſs, you have made promiſes of amendment, and yet all came to nothing, but after that you went on in a careleſs courſe of life. You whom I now ſupoſe to be throwly converted to God, let it grieve your hearts thus to remember the ſins of your unregenerate ſtate, that you ſhould live ſo long eſtrang'd from God, and entertain ſuch unworthy thoughts of him, and do ſo much to provoke him; whom you have ſince found ſo good and gracious. How can you with dry

eyes

eyes think of that time, when you were like others, *foolish, diobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures?* Me-thinks you should be fill'd with a kind of horrour when you do but reflect upon that dismal state: When you think how near you were to the burning Lake, and yet how secure; and when you consider what a meer sink of loathsome sins your hearts once were. Oh sirs! Was not that a sad time, when you could take delight in nothing but in doing your selves mischief? When nothing tasted sweet but draughts of poison? When the very bent of your souls was contrary to God and Godliness? So that whatever had a tendency hereto was nauseated by you? Prayer was a burden, hearing a burden, holy conference strange and troublesome, and a godly life was accounted the greatest toil and slavery in the World; so that you could go whole daies and weeks without any thought of God, and never feel any hurt in it. Oh can you without shame remember, how you have many a time hearkened to Satan's temptation, whilst the good Spirit of God hath been resisted and griev'd? How did your loving Saviour follow you from time to time, and by his Spirit and Ministers beseech you that you would be reconciled to God? and yet you did stubbornly and unkindly put him off; when he had laid open to you what he had done for you, and what advantages he came to bring you, yet you slighted his offers, as if they were inconsiderable things. Are you not amazed at your own daring impudence and presumption, to make the great God wait on you so long in vain? He who in a moment could have stopt that breath which he gave you, and thrown you into the Hell you deserved, that yet you durst disobey his commands, yea even reject the suit he made to you, to save your own souls. But to proceed, you are also to call to mind your miscarriages, since God by the power of his grace brought you home to himself, and shew'd you so much of the evil of sin, that you acknowledged your former behaviour to be full as vile as I have been representing it, and did ingage your selves to him, to become his obedient people. Now consider how you have answered this engagement. And though since that time, your sins may not have been so gross nor so frequent as before they were, yet they are now of another nature, and capable of greater aggravations, as being committed against greater light and experienced love, even

againſt that God who hath freely pardoned you and received you into his favour. Think then how unſuitably you have walk't to the profeſſion you have made, and the means you have enjoy'd, how unthankful you have been for mercies, how unfruitful and unſerviceable ſince you became the ſervants of God, though heretofore you had done ſo much againſt him; think how little you have done as Parents, Maſters, and Neighbours to advance his glory, and conſider and bewail all other failings, in the duties of your Relations. Oh think what folly it was in you ſo much as to venture upon the leaſt ſin, who have been convinced that its your own greateſt hurt; or to ſtart aſide from the holy path, to walk in which you have found to be infinitely moſt for your own eaſe and advantage. Let it grieve you to find ſuch remnants of ſin yet in your ſelves, any inclination to evil and backwardneſs to good. With ſorrow look back upon all your ſlips and haltings, and partial backſlidings, that you have made no more progreſs in holineſs, nor got more good by the priviledges vouchſaft you. Be humbled in the remembrance of your dulneſs, hypocriſie, formality in religious duties, being either prone to neglect them, or ſlubber them over in a cold and drowſie manner, or elſe to reſt in them. Call to mind alſo your unfaithfulneſs to the many promiſes, you have made of better obedience, in your Prayers, or at the Lords Table; and eſpecially review your carriage ſince the laſt Sacrament, you who have formerly received it. And having by ſuch like conſiderations as theſe affected your hearts with a ſenſe of your iniquities, humbly betake your ſelves to God, and lay open all before him by a free and full confeſſion: acknowledge what wretched hainous ſinners you are, and how unworthy of the leaſt favour, and beg of him to work and increaſe in you that true and kindly ſorrow for ſin, which may fit you for mercy. And ceaſe not by your good will from this confeſſion, till you find your ſouls even melted within you, in the apprehenſion of your own vileneſs, but however ceaſe not, till you find in your hearts a loathing of every ſin, and of your ſelves by reaſon of it. And if you have but an inward ſenſe of your ſores and pollutions, you will not want ſuch words to expreſs it, as will be acceptable to God: Only ſee that you be ſincere, and let your heart make your confeſſions rather than your tongue. Labour

to be as ſenſible of your caſe, as you would be if now you ſtood before a King whom you had offended, from whom except you could beg a pardon, you muſt preſently be put to death, of which pardon there was good hope, if he did but perceive you to be really ſorry for your fault. Oh how affectionate and earneſt would you be in this caſe! and would have words at will to expreſs your ſelf. How paſſionately would you acknowledge and bewail the offence you had committed? and with what vehemence profeſs againſt ever being guilty of the like? And how importunately would you beg for mercy, when you ſaw no other way but preſent death, if your importunity did not prevail? Thus behave your ſelves towards God, and believe that he ſtands over you now in your Cloſet, and hearkens to your prayers, and obſerves whether you be hearty in them or not. But remember all this while, it is an inward diſlike and abhorrence of ſin, wherein the truth of your Repentance conſiſts, more than in bare confeſſing it, and ſpeaking againſt it with the greateſt fervour: Theſe are required too, but beware of taking up with theſe; Beware I ſay, as ever you hope for mercy, of retaining any ſecret liking to ſin, or the leaſt thoughts of continuing in it ſtill, whilſt with a great deal of ſtir you revile it as ſuch an abominable thing. But rather, if you find in your ſouls a kind of hankering after ſome old luſt, not yet throughly mortified, betake your ſelves to thoſe conſiderations which may bring you out of love with it, as how little its like to do for you, what an happineſs it doth now and will hereafter deprive you of, what a miſery it leads to, with other the like formerly laid down; and quit not theſe thoughts, till you find your ſelves turned againſt it. For once again let me aſſure you, then, and never till then, is your Repentance right, when you are not only brought to grieve for ſin, but to hate it; when your hearts are not only broken in the remembrance of it, but are broken off from, and thorowly bent againſt it.

Though this exerciſe of Repentance ſeems moſt properly preparative to the work you are going about, yet in ſuch a penitent humble frame would I have you be, even when you are at the Lords Table. If you eat this Bread and mingle the Wine with tears, it will be never the worſe for your ſouls. And muſt it not needs affect thee to behold Chriſts body broken, and his blood poured out here in a figure, and then to think with thy ſelf, This was ſin, *my* ſin;

even *my* pride and earthlineſs, and all the wickedneſs of *my* heart and life, was part of that load, which he bare on his own body on the Croſs, when he cried out, *my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Might not the Lord call to me, and even ſhew me the Print of my many grievous ſins, in his hands and feet, and the deep ſtabs they gave him? And yet ungrateful wretch that I am, how little have I valued this his love? how little hath my heart been affected herewith? Where had I been, and what had become of me, if he had not thus undertaken for me? Oh what had my ſins brought upon me, if he had not interpos'd and kept it off? how mad and ſenſleſs have I been, in venturing upon ſin, harbouring and delighting in ſin? Sin, which is ſo hainous a thing, that without ſhedding of blood it muſt not be remitted; and for which no blood, but that of Chriſts could obtain a remiſſion. How more eſpecially hainous then is my guilt, in undervaluing this blood ſo much and ſo long as I have done? How baſe was my heart to give entertainment to ſin, after I had heard what it had done againſt Chriſt? and to deny entertainment to him, after I had heard how much he had done for me? Was his kindneſs ſuch as to bleed for my ſins, and ſhall not I weep for them, eſpecially for the unkindneſs I have ſhewn to him? As God never ſhew'd greater love to Man, than in delivering up his Son for our offences, ſo he never ſhew'd greater hatred of ſin than by this action; and therefore conformably, as we ought hereby to be brought to the greateſt love of God, ſo to the deepeſt hatred of ſin and humiliation for it. But I have formerly more fully ſhewn how the conſideration of Chriſts death, may bring us to true Repentance, and what I there ſpoke chiefly of a change of ſtate, may be applied to the particular exerciſe of Repentance, wherefore I ſhall inſiſt no more on this. Only let me meet with an objection, that may perhaps be in the minds of ſome, namely, *That ſorrow for ſin at this time, ſcarce ſeems conſiſtent with that hope of mercy, that joy and thankfulneſs, which are chiefly required in the Communicant.* Know therefore, that I preſs no ſorrow, but what is a preparation to joy, and doth even animate and exalt it, whilſt the humble Chriſtian reflects upon his own nothingneſs and unworthineſs, and thence is carried forth to the greater admiration of that mercy that hath ſo favourably regarded him. And take notice farther, that I would have the ſenſe of Divine bounty, chiefly to raiſe and keep up this humiliation; whilſt

whilſt we think with our ſelves, *Oh what wretched creatures are we, thus to offend ſo loving a Father, who notwithſtanding all our provocations, is yet compaſſionate towards us, and upon our return to him is ſo readily reconciled!* To retain this apprehenſion of love in the midſt of our mournings, will make them moſt ingenuous, and even pleaſant to our ſouls; and though it will make us ſincere and deep in our repentance, yet it will ſo moderate our ſpirits, that we ſhall not *ſorrow as thoſe without hope*; and I could wiſh, that Chriſtians in all their ſorrowings would obſerve this rule. But then that ſuch an ingenuous ſhame and ſorrow as this is conſiſtent with the greateſt confidence of mercy, there is not the leaſt doubt, for which (to omit all further proof of a matter ſo plain) ſee that very fit Text, *Ezek.* 16. 62, 63. *And I will eſtabliſh my Covenant with thee, and thou ſhalt know that I am the Lord: That thou maiſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord God.* It is to be conſidered moreover, that the promiſes of joy are principally made to this frame. The ſpirit of the humble and contrite, God hath promiſed to revive; They that mourn ſhall be comforted. And they who come to the Table of the Lord weeping, are moſt likely to return from thence rejoycing.

4. And when you are wrought to this humiliation for, and hatred of ſin, you will eaſily be brought to the next part of your work, which is, *ſtedfaſtly to reſolve by the grace of God, never more to give willing entertainment to the ſame, but to be entirely devoted to God by Jeſus Chriſt, to love, pleaſe, and ſerve him all your dayes.* I have told you how at the Lords Supper you renew your Covenant, to perform thoſe duties which you were engaged to, by being Baptized into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Renouncing carnal ſelf, you profeſs to place your happineſs in the love of God, and no farther to regard or pleaſe your ſelves, than is conſiſtent with his pleaſure: Renouncing the world, your own abilities, righteouſneſs and worthineſs, and all ways to happineſs, which are ſet up againſt Chriſt, you profeſs to take him alone for your Redeemer, and to reſign up your ſelves to him, that he may bring you to the fruition of God; and therefore Renouncing the Devil who would draw you from God and

Chriſt, to gratifie your luſts with earthly things, you profeſs your reſolutions to be led by the Holy Spirit of God, in thoſe ways that lead to his everlaſting Kingdom. You who are truly willing to all this, (for to ſuch I ſpeak) I would have you in the moſt ſerious manner, to profeſs the ſame before God, and eſpecially in the Prayers that you make, in preparation for the Sacrament. Bind your ſelves over to him by the ſtricteſt vow, that he ſhall be your God and you will be his people. Profeſs to him, that he ſhall be the portion of your ſouls, that you will have none in heaven but him, and will deſire nothing on earth in compariſon of him ; that if he will but vouchſafe you his ſaving love in Jeſus Chriſt, you ſhall be indifferent to all things here below, as knowing that in his favour alone you are abundantly provided for. Acknowledge his right to govern you, and diſpoſe of you, being your Maker and Preſerver, infinitely wiſe and good; and engage to take him for your Soveraign and Lord, to render a ſincere, unlimited obedience to his commands, and quietly to ſubmit to his diſpenſations. Profeſs to him, that you relinquiſh all right to your ſelves, and give up all into his hands, to do with you what he pleaſeth ; conſecrating all to his glory, whatever he doth or ſhall afford you, being reſolved, through his aſſiſtance, ſo to improve and employ it. Promiſe to him, that neither your own will, nor the will of any mortal man, ſhall be obey'd in contradiction to his. And bethink your ſelves of thoſe ſins, whereof you have been more eſpecially guilty, in thought, word, or deed ; and of the duties you have omitted : And engage your ſelves particularly againſt thoſe ſins, and to the performance of thoſe duties. And then remember under what notion you enter into Covenant with God, and what kind of creatures you are, even poor loſt ſinners, loaded with much guilt, which you could never, by any ſatisfaction of your own making, take off from your ſelves , and alſo exceeding weak, ſo that you cannot by your own ſtrength give that obedience to God which he requires, nor vanquiſh the difficulties which you will meet with; wherefore it is of abſolute neceſſity that you accept of Jeſus Chriſt, as your *Deliverer* and *Strength* : *For he only who hath the Son, hath the Father alſo.* Profeſs then before God your unfeigned willingneſs to cloſe with the Lord JESUS, to all thoſe ends for which he offers himſelf to the world.

Acknowledge

Acknowledge to him, that you neither expect mercy for any merit of your own, nor set upon duty in your own might, nor look for acceptance of any service for its own worth, but that you humbly depend upon Christ the Mediator for all that you stand in need of: Acknowledge his right to rule over and in you, as having bought you out of slavery with his own most precious blood, to whose mild and gracious Government you will therefore submit your selves. Profess your willingness and earnest desire, to have your hearts purged and sanctified by his Holy Spirit, and your lives thereby directed according to the precepts of the Gospel. Thus profess your acceptance of Christ, and submission to the Spirit, that you may be brought into the favour of God, and be enabled to please and glorifie him by your holy conversation: For all tends to this, even to make you holy in heart and life. Therefore *are we married to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit unto God*, Rom. 7. 4. *And the fruits of righteousness are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God*, Phil. 1. 11. *In him we are created unto good works.* This is the effect of his death and resurrection, that we might be dead to sin, but alive unto God, *Rom.* 6. throughout. They are Christ's Disciples that bring forth much fruit to the glory of God the Father, *Joh.* 15. 8. And therefore is the Spirit of life given us through Jesus Christ, that we may be made free from the power of sin and death, that the carnal mind might be taken away, and we made subject to God, and able to please him; yea, that we might rise up to an higher kind of life, more spiritual and heavenly than was ordinarily attainable under the Law, *Rom.* 8. the former part of that Chapter. This being then the sum of all, *to devote your selves to God by Jesus Christ, to live in his love and fear, and in strict obedience to his Laws, till you shall be taken to Glory*; you that are firmly purposed to do this, and have made promises thereof betwixt God and your own souls, do you eat the Bread and drink the Wine in the Sacrament as a confirmation of these promises. Let this be remembred I beseech you, whatever you forget, *That hereby you do most straightly engage your selves to live a Righteous, Sober and Godly life, from this very day, and to the end of your days.* This some give as the reason, why the Name *Sacrament* is put upon Baptism and the Lords Supper, because they are of alike nature with that Oath, which Souldiers were wont to take,

to

to be obedient to their General, and rather to dye than to forſake their Colours; which Military Oath was called a Sacrament; and thus both by Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper are we conſecrated to the Service of God. A very Heathen anciently, when he gave an account of the practice of the Chriſtians, ſaid of them, that they did ſometimes in their aſſemblies, by eating and drinking together, engage one another to abſtain from theft, murder, adultery, and all kind of wickedneſs; ſo right a notion he had of the deſign of this duty. Imagine then you heard Chriſt ſaying, *All that will hearken unto me, and become ſuch as I would have them, both in their hearts and lives, let them come and take the Sacrament in witneſs of their reſolution to cleave to me.* And let the voice of your Soul in anſwer be, *Lord I am willing to hearken to thee, to take thee for my Redeemer and Lord, and it is my unfeigned deſire to be holy as thou would'ſt have me; it is my reſolution from this time forward, by the help of thy Spirit, to yeild a ſincere obedience to all thy commands, and not allow my ſelf in any known ſin, whilſt life ſhall laſt, and in witneſs hereof I take this Sacrament, which thou haſt call'd me to.* And thus thou do'ſt plight thy troth to Jeſus Chriſt, by partaking of theſe conſcrated Elements, as friends are wont to break a piece of Silver betwixt them, to bind each other the faſter to the promiſes they make; or as the Man and Woman expreſs their conſent to Marriage, by their uſe of the Ring. And hereby thou do'ſt in effect profeſs, that thou expecteſt Salvation by Chriſt upon no other terms, than as thou ſhalt be found faithful in making and keeping this Covenant with him. Thou mayſt eaſily perceive this is no trifling matter, and therefore good reaſon there is, I ſhould adviſe thee to be ſerious and deliberate in it, leſt by thy hypocriſie thou ſhould'ſt even bind over thy ſelf to damnation: For if thy heart will not conſent to ſuch a Covenant as I have deſcribed, think not I go about to perſwade thee to diſſemble with God. But yet remember, there is nothing in all this, that may afford any ground of heſitation or doubting, whether thou ſhould'ſt do it or not, unleſs thou art in doubt, whether thou had'ſt beſt be ſav'd or damn'd: For except thy heart be brought to ſuch a ſubjection to, and cloſure with Chriſt, it's impoſſible thou ſhould'ſt ever be ſaved by him. This Wedding-garment of Faith and Obedience, which I would have

thee

thee put on, is as neceſſary for thy being received into Heaven, as for thy being a welcome Gueſt at this Table. And by the way conſider how you have endangered your Souls, you who have from time to time received Sacraments, and never thought of any ſuch Engagement as this; which yet the very action it ſelf layes upon you, nor ever took care to be faithful thereto. In what a daring manner have you laid your ſelves open to vengeance? And how great is that patience which hath hitherto bore with you? Even whilſt you have been wilfully guilty of moſt horrid perjury. I mention not this to drive you to deſpair, no, there is yet hope of mercy concerning this thing, if now at length you are but ſenſible of your miſcarriage, and will carefully reform it for the future.

Whoever you are, that do now from your very hearts render up your ſelves to God by your redeemer, doubt not of a gracious acceptance: you that with ſuch deſigns do aſſemble to this Supper. (and none elſe are fit to come there) of you will Chriſt ſay, when he looks upon you, as once of his Diſciples who ſat about him, *Behold my mother and my brethren*, Mar. 3. 34. for as he there adds, *ver.* 35. *whoſoever ſhall do the will of God, the ſame is his Brother, Siſter and Mother.* Yea, to you will the *Lord Almighty* ſay, *I will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my Sons and Daughters*, 2 Cor. 6. 18. and ſafely may you regard your ſelves in this comfortable nearneſs of relation to him, which brings me to the next.

5. You that are thus truly humbled for ſin, and turned from it to God by Jeſus Chriſt, upon good grounds *may, and ought to believe, that God will make good all the promiſes of his Covenant, which he hath made to ſuch as you are.* Whereupon you may with an holy boldneſs beg the ſame at his hands, and accordingly do it. Humbly beſeech him to deal with you according to thoſe Gracious promiſes, wherein he hath cauſed you to truſt. And for the ſtrengthning of your faith, conſider ſome of the chief of them and plead them with God in prayer, and beg the bleſſings contained therein. Pray earneſtly that the *Blood of Chriſt may cleanſe you from all unrighteouſneſs*, that *your iniquities may be remembred no more*, but that you *may have peace with him, being freely juſtified by his grace.* Beſeech him to give you his *Holy Spirit, to carry on the work of faith with power*, to enable you againſt temptations of all

all ſorts, to fill you with peace and joy, to lead you in the way wherein he would have you to walk, and to *perform that good thing he hath begun in you to the day of Jeſus.* Pray that you may be found in Chriſt, at that great approaching day, and may ſtand before him with boldneſs, and be diſcharged from all accuſations, and ſet with the ſheep on his right hand, and with that little Flock be received into the Kingdom, which he hath promiſed to all that love him. And ſince you are as yet in the body, which ſtands in need of outward comforts and ſupplies, and are in a World where you have relations, friends and affairs, wherein you are concern'd, you have promiſes touching theſe alſo; and may therefore confidently beg your Heavenly Father, who knows what you need, to take care of you and yours, and furniſh you with what he ſees convenient for you, to direct you in all difficulties, and by his providence ſo to order all your affairs as may tend moſt to his glory, and your good. Ask theſe things of God, and whatever you perceive neceſſary, and doubt not but they ſhall be given unto you more abundantly than you can ask or think, and look upon them as confirmed to you by the Sacrament. But remember always, that it is for Chriſt's ſake that theſe mercies are conferr'd upon you, ſo that you are to acknowledge your ſelves unworthy of the leaſt of them, and confeſs if you had your own deſert, you ſhould be ſtript of all comforts, and be laid under the greateſt miſeries. Profeſs therefore all that you hope for, is on the account of Jeſus Chriſt, who hath purchaſt all things needful for the happineſs of his people, after a forfeiture was made of all by the fall of *Adam*: through him are theſe good things promiſed and theſe promiſes fulfilled. In the new Covenant founded in his blood, they all accompany his perſon; and are aſcertained to thoſe that cordially receive him, as the Wife by taking a Noble-man to her Husband, is made partaker of his Eſtate and Honours. So that having Chriſt to be yours, all that is in Heaven or Earth to do you good is yours alſo, by vertue of that Covenant which ſhall never fail: Faithful is he that hath promiſed, *and will do it.*

Wherefore this Sacrament which you are about to receive, being a Seal of that Covenant, you are to take it as an aſſurance and pledg, that all the bleſſings of it, ſuch thing as I directed you to pray, ſhall be beſtowed upon

upon you, in that time and order which God ſees beſt. Here then you ſee is work for Faith, if you would receive the comfort which this Ordinance holds forth. And more particularly, I ſhall tell you in two words, what it is *for* principally, and in what manner you are here to exerciſe faith.

1. *Look upon the Sacrament as ſealing to you a full and free pardon of all the ſins you ſtand in need of, whether by nature or practice*, ſo that none of them ſhall be laid to your charge, ſo as to condemn you at judgment. And for your clearer proceeding herein, you are to apprehend the Sacrament as joyn'd to the promiſe of pardon in the the Goſpel, and ſo to look upon it as a Seal annext to a Writing, that promiſeth mercy to Rebels that ſubmit themſelves: And if a King ſhould ſend his Officers with many ſuch Writings to a Company of men that were riſen up in Arms againſt him, and the Officer ſhould tell them, *Sir, here's a gracious meſſage ſent you from the King, here are papers under his own hand, wherein he aſſures a Pardon to ſuch of you that will now come in, and here's alſo his own Seal put to them for your greater aſſurance, all which for your ſecurity, I'll put into your hand preſently, if you ſubmit your ſelves.* They who upon this come in, and take theſe Papers, have a pardon thereby given them, which they may boldly produce, if afterwards they ſhould be accuſed. Even thus are you to conceive God's Embaſſador ſaying to you: *All you that are willing to receive Jeſus Chriſt to rule over you, and ſave you, he hath promiſed in his Goſpel to forgive you all your ſins, and (beſide that of Baptiſm) hath ordain'd the Sacrament of his ſupper, as a Seal of this gracious promiſe, his Inſtrument of pardon; and here I ſtand by his appointment to give out the ſame.* You now who find your ſelves willing thus to receive Chriſt, are to take this Sacrament as an aſſurance that this promiſe ſhall be made good to you; and ſo look upon it, and with this quiet your Conſcience, when it is unjuſtly clamorous, and ſilence Satan when he haunts you with temptations to deſpair: Then ſay within thy ſelf, here's the Word of God aſſuring forgiveneſs to all that take Chriſt for their Lord and Saviour, which by his Grace I find my ſelf inclined and enabled to do, and he hath bound this word with his Oath, and to both he hath added his Sacraments as Seals, and ſhall this three-fold Cord be broken, what

what ſhould give me ſatisfaction, if this do not? wherefore, be gone, Satan, ſhall I not rather believe thou art a Lyar, who telleſt me, repent and believe, and do all that I can, my ſins are ſo great they can never be forgiven, than once ſuſpect that the moſt true God, will ever revoke that which he hath ſaid and ſworn and ſealed to? And at the great Judgment Day Chriſt will own his *Hand* and *Seal*, and then ſolemnly acquit thee, whom he now pardons by his Goſpel. Safely then mayſt thou triumph with the Apoſtle, *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It's God that juſtifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It's Chriſt that died, &c.* And this Chriſt with his whole purchaſe is made over to thee, Oh believing Soul. Even by this Sacrament is his blood as effectually made thine, to waſh off all the Guilt that cleaves to thee, as if thou had'ſt been bath'd in his warm blood to that purpoſe, yea much more effectually.

2. The other direction I would give you is, *That you take the Sacrament as an earneſt of the everlaſting Glory*, which ſhall ſhortly without queſtion be vouchſaft to you who remain ſtedfaſt in your Covenant with God. Here in like manner you are to look upon the Goſpel as a *deed of gift*, whereby, through Chriſt, an *Inheritance* in the Heavens is ſettled upon you, to which *deed* alſo the Sacrament doth *ſeal*. Even as an Houſe is made over by the delivery of a *Key*, and Land by a *Turf*, ſo there is a kind of conveyance of Heaven it ſelf made to you by the delivery of the Sacramental Bread and Wine into your hands. And when you receive them imagine you heard God ſaying to you, *Here poor Soul, take this in earneſt of that eternal life, which I have prepared for, and will beſtow upon thee.* And if the heavenly Kingdom be thus aſſured to you, on condition of your continuance in the Love of God, you need not queſtion but all things needful for your paſſage thither, are herein comprehended. If you ſhall have glory given you, then be ſure you ſhall have that Grace which may fit you for, and bring you to it; wherefore I ſhall ſpeak particularly under the next head. And if you are thus richly provided for as to your Souls, do you think your Bodies ſhall be neglected? No, never fear it; whatever ſhall be found really good for you, ſhall be vouchſaf'd. What ſhall you have Chriſt and his Spirit, Grace and Glory? and do you queſtion whether you

ſhall

ſhall have food and raiment? Will the Father make his Son Heir of all when he comes to age, and will he not afford him a maintenance till then? Only refer all your concernments to God, to deal with you as he ſhall think fit, and queſtion not but he'll diſpoſe of all to your contentment, if you be reaſonable. The whole World is in the hands of your Father, and it is not for want of power or love, if you have not the greateſt ſhare in it; but it is from his wiſdom and mercy, which will rather give you the *beſt*. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for you*, and hath given him to you, *how ſhall he not with him freely give you all things?* Rom. 8. 32. Would you have a larger word? Is there any thing you want, not contained in this? The like you may ſee, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21, 22. *Things preſent and things to come, all are yours, ye being Chriſts.* And as Godlineſs thus hath the promiſes of this life, and that which is to come, ſo both ſorts of promiſes are here confirmed to you by the Sacrament, which is a Seal of that full Covenant, wherein bleſſings both of the right hand and of the left, are given to Believers.

You may ſee then, I hope, by this time, that this is no common Bread and Wine which is appointed for ſo great purpoſes. If a *twig* was given into your hands, whereby ſome great Eſtate was coveyed to you, you would value it ſure above a common ſtick. Wherefore if you would not be lamentably wanting to your ſelves, and Enemies to your own comforts, I beſeech you, all you that love the Lord Jeſus, know your own priviledges, and fix theſe things firmly in your minds; and let not the greatneſs of them hinder your belief, ſince they are as ſure as great; but ſee that you apprehend a reality in all that is done at this holy Table. See Chriſt himſelf in the Miniſter, ſee alſo the benefits that come by Chriſt in the Bread and Wine, and ſtedfaſtly believe that theſe are given you by Chriſt, as verily as the Elements are given you by the Miniſter. For *pardon and right to eternal life*, are things to be believed, not felt, ſo that it is by believing that you muſt receive the comfort of them. Wherefore, beg of God to clear up theſe things to your apprehenſions, to remove doubtings, to ſtrengthen your faith, and to joyn the inward Seal of his Spirit, to the outward adminiſtration of his Ordinance. And do you take the boldneſs though,

though with the greateſt humility, to profeſs to God, that you take this Sacrament as an *earneſt* of all thoſe mercies which you hope for from his bounty, as hereby you deliver up your ſelves, and all that you have and are, to his will and pleaſure. And as an *Earneſt* engageth both the Maſter and Servant, to do according to their agreement, ſo is God graciouſly pleaſed hereby to engage himſelf to his Creatures; ſo that not only from his Bounty, but from his Juſtice and Faithfulneſs, may you expect whatever he hath promiſed to do for you. There being thus, a Sacred Covenant tranſacted betwixt God and your Souls, ſee only that you be not treacherous, and Heaven and Earth ſhall ſooner fail, than God will depart from one tittle of all that he hath ſaid. With confidence may you look upon God as your Father, Chriſt as your Head and Husband, the Holy Spirit as your Comforter and Guide, the Angels as your friends ready at Chriſt's command to do you Service, the Saints in both worlds as your Brethren; and the full enjoyment of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in the joyful communion of Saints and Angels, your aſſured everlaſting portion.

6. Since you in your ſelves are poor impotent creatures, who *without Chriſt can do nothing*, but muſt be beholden to that Grace, which drew you to this Covenant to hold you in it, and to help you to perform your part; and ſince there is of this Grace, even now to be given but to the prepared Soul, *Let it be your care to get very ſenſible of your Spiritual wants, and to come hither earneſtly deſiring and expecting a ſupply.* Conſider well with your ſelves, what Graces you find weakeſt and moſt wanting, what duties you are prone moſt to fail in, and humbly beg ſuitable help and aſſiſtance. Examine what temptations you are moſt expoſed to, and oftneſt overcome by, what corruptions you find yet ſtrongeſt in you, and eſpecially what thoſe ſins are to which you are inclined moſt by nature, and cuſtom, or are moſt in danger of by your Employments or converſe in the World, and repreſent all this in your Prayers before God, and beg of him more power and ſtrength againſt them, and now by this Ordinance to convey it to you: Look round about, and conſider well the work you have to do, the difficulties you are to grapple with, the ſeveral relations wherein you ſtand, the duties they bring along with them, and now ſue out for direction

rection and assistance in all. And for your encouragement, remember what I told you, that God hath engaged himself to all you his Covenant-people, to afford you whatever may conduce to your happiness; now since you stand in present need of the supplies of his Grace, you may confidently expect the same. He that will bring you to the end, will give you the means. As if a King should call some of his poor Subjects, to give them great possessions in another Country which he had conquered, and should also furnish them with store of money and provisions for the way, even thus bounteously will God deal with you. Oh Believers! He'll put strength into your feet, and revive your fainting Spirits, that you may hold on your way; you that *wait upon the Lord*, though you have no power and might in your selves, yet *shall renew your Strength, and run and not be weary, and walk and not faint*, till you come to your journeys end.

By faith in Christ we are ingrafted into him, as a branch into the Vine, and are related as a Member to the Head, so that he is become the root of our life, and from him shall sap and nourishment be communicated to our needy Souls. He is the dispenser and fountain of Grace, and his Ordinances are as Conduit-pipes, and Conveyances of the same. And of this nature is the Lord's Supper. Here Believers are made to *drink into the Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. Which words have a plain reference to this Sacrament, Baptism being mentioned at the beginning of the verse. Come hither then, Oh ye thirsty Souls, and be refesht with the waters of life that shall flow in upon you in abundance. Open your mouths wide, and they shall be filled. Be not straightned in your selves, for the bowels of Christ are not straightned towards you. Bring hither capacious enlarged hearts, and you shall carry away accordingly. The anointing of the Spirit, which is shed abroad upon you, is like the Widows Oyl, 2 *Kings* 4. 6. It will not stay running whilst there is room to receive it. Oh why is it then that we are so empty? the fault is not in Christ, we must needs acknowledge: But let us examine whether we have not stuft our hearts with other things, that leave little or no room for Grace to be poured in there. Are we not fill'd with the love of earthly things? Is not our delight most of all in profits and pleasures? And our desires eagerly carried out after them? Do not Creature-comforts so

poſſeſs and fill us, that they even thruſt forth the Holy Spirit from his habitation? Do we not grieve him by our carnal joys, and cauſe him to withdraw from us? Oh! For ſhame let it be no longer thus with us. Alaſs! how little can theſe narrow hearts of ours contain of the fulneſs of God, though they were widened to their utmoſt preſent capacity? And ſhall we pinch and ſtraighten them yet more, by entertaining every trifle there? This is that room which the King of Heaven would have entire to himſelf, and ſhall every common Gueſt, every Beggar be lodged there? Is it fit that Money-changers, and Merchants ſhould fill the Houſe of God? That it ſhould be a Thorow-fare for every Veſſel, every common and unclean thing? Oh let your hearts then be conſecrated as Temples for the Holy Ghoſt, not Dens of ſuch Thieves as rob God of his due, and draw away thoſe deſires and affections which he claims as his own. And now let the Gates of thoſe Temples fly open, that the King of Glory may come in. Now in an eſpecial manner let your hearts be emptied of all traſh, that they may be fill'd with the good things which are here diſtributed. If you were ſet to an heap of Gold, and bidden to carry away as much as you could graſp, you would keep no dirt nor ſtones in your hand, that would make them hold ſo much the leſs. Looſen your ſelves then from the inordinate love or thought of any created Good, your Houſes or Lands, your pleaſures or employment; withdraw your minds as much as poſſible from all temporal concernments, with which whilſt you are taken up, the edge of your deſire after Heavenly things is extreamly abated. And if you come not hither with great expectations, you are like to be little the better. If you have no higher deſigns, but with a little ſeeming Devotion to eat Bread, and drink Wine, then Bread and Wine are the beſt things that you are like to meet with: For is it probable you ſhould find that which you never look after? But if thou comeſt hither with an holy greedineſs after greater meaſures of Grace, thirſting for the living God, as the Hart pants after the water-brooks, and as the parched ground gapes for the refreſhing ſhowers, then fear it not, thy deſires ſhall be gratified. Thou canſt not pleaſe God better, than by looking for the greateſt and beſt things from him, which bring moſt glory to himſelf, and do moſt good to thy Soul. Beg

earneſtly

earneſtly then that by the power of his Spirit accompanying this Ordinance, thou maiſt partake yet more of a new and Divine nature; that thou maiſt find ſtrength and vigour diffuſed through the whole man, and maiſt now receive ſome communications of that light and life, which Chriſt came into the World that his people might have, and that they might have it more abundantly; now pray that his Death and Reſurrection may have their power and efficacy upon thee, that vertue may iſſue forth from him for thy healing. Beg, that by this food thy luſts may be poiſoned and deſtroy'd, and every Grace ſtrengthned and increas'd. And be particular in thy deſires. (Oh that ſomething may be done this day againſt my pride and paſſion, my wordlineſs, and ſenſuality, my diſtruſtful fears and diſcontents.) Oh that I may be delivered from that liſtleſneſs, dulneſs, and diſtraction, wherewith I am haunted in holy duties. Oh that I may find my heart hereby drawn nearer to God, and carried out with more unweariedneſs and chearfulneſs in his ſervice? That I may be better enabled for a conſcientious diſcharge of my duty, in every place and relation that I do ſtand in, and in the whole courſe of my Life. Bleſſed God, thou who knoweſt the ſtate of my Soul, give unto me, I beſeech thee, what thou ſeeſt I need moſt. I have an hard heart, Lord ſoften it; a dead heart, Lord enliven it; I am much in the dark, Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. Make me more Humble, Holy, and Heavenly; Oh take this ſeaſon for coming in upon my Soul, and beſtowing more of thy ſelf upon me, that I may become more like to thee. Theſe, O God, are mercies thou haſt promiſed to thy people, and bidden them to ask; theſe thou art wont to convey by thine Ordinances, for theſe things therefore do I wait upon thee this Day; with no lower aims do I come to thy Table; with ſuch precious things is the Lord Jeſus wont to feaſt his Gueſt, and of his infinite fulneſs it is, that I hope to participate; through him it is I hope to be ſtrengthned with might in my inner man, even to be made ſtrong by the Grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus. Oh, will the Head let a member periſh? Shall a branch wither for want of ſuccour and juice? Bleſſed Saviour, thou who waſt ſo willing to ſhed thy blood for us, art thou not as willing to beſtow the fruits of it upon us? Art thou not ſtill as merciful and tender as ever thou

waſt? Thou who didſt once ſo readily heal diſeaſes, and cure all that come to thee, haſt thou not as much mercy to Souls as to Bodies? Lord, I believe thou art as able and ready to help as ever? *If thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean*, and it is my hope that thou wilt. Outward means without thee cannot do it, yet here thou haſt bid us attend, and thus I do, waiting for the deſcent of thy Holy Spirit. Oh grant the requeſts of thy poor creature: Say to me, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*; yea, even as thou wilt, oh Lord, let it be unto me, who art ever readily and ſtrongly inclined to do thy people good. Thus ſtir up your ſelves, and actuate Faith in ſuch holy breathings as theſe, and be aſſured, ſuch additions of grace as you are fitted for, and God in his infinite Wiſdom ſeems meet at preſent to deal out, ſhall be confer'd upon you; and being refreſht and ſtrengthned with this banquet, you may cheerfully walk on your way to glory.

7. From all that hath been ſaid of the greatneſs of the mercies here commemorated, beſtow'd and ſealed to, it will appear moſt reaſonable and juſt, *that the hearts of all Gods faithful ſervants ſhould here be raiſed to the greateſt height of divine love, thankfulneſs and joy.* I put theſe together, becauſe, though in the notion they are different, yet in the workings of the Soul they uſually go together. That ſame goodneſs which works love and thankfulneſs, cauſeth joy too, as it's begun to be enjoyed, or ſtrongly hop'd for; and this is a frame moſt proper to a Communicant, all his preparations being much in order to it: Therefore ſhould he get ſenſible of his miſery and humbled for his ſin; that he may have the more affectionate thankful ſenſe of the mercy that pitied and pardoned him. Wherefore labour much with your ſelves, even before-hand, to riſe up to this ingenuous and pleaſant temper, which will prove ſo acceptable both to God and your ſelves. Dwell intently upon that amazing mercy, which God hath revealed to mankind in Jeſus Chriſt, which thing the *Angels themſelves deſire to look into*: Ponder well the ſeveral heightning circumſtances thereof; the meanneſs, ſinfulneſs and miſery of man, the Majeſty of God, the dignity of Chriſt, the greatneſs of his condeſcention and ſufferings, the fulneſs and freeneſs of his purchaſe and offers. Study all his dealings with your ſelves in particular, whereby he hath accompliſht in you the deſigns of his love, and continue

tinue these musings, till you feel a fire of love and joy kindled within you. Let not Satan so far have his will of you as to cast you into these dejections, and groundless perplexities, which will rob God of his praise and you of your comfort. Let him not be able to perswade you that God is cruel and unmerciful, and hardly reconciled to returning sinners: Have you not the strongest, and most unanswerable demonstration at hand, to confute him? Would you desire, or can you have a greater evidence of the graciousness of his nature, than that very mercy which you are going to remember? Even his giving his only Son to die for us, whilst we were yet *ungodly* and *enemies*. And did he of his own free grace, without our asking and against our deserving, provide a Saviour for us, and is he yet unwilling to save us? Did he find out a means for our reconciliation to himself, and is he now backward to be reconciled? Does he now importune us to take, that which he is unwilling to give us? Be not, I beseech you, of such an easie belief of the Devil's gross fallacies, and so hardly drawn to believe what God hath not only said, but done, so much to make it past all doubtings. See the Apostle arguing much after the same manner, *Rom.* 5. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Oh let your hearts then be fill'd with admiration of that love, which God hath herein expreſt to men, the wondrous greatness whereof is such, that it almost surpasseth our Faith, and doth far surpass our full comprehension. That there should be a way for the recovery of self-destroying sinners, contrived by him whom they had offended, and brought about by the death of his own Son, that they might be raised to the highest happiness, even an eternity of the most ravishing joys, in neareſt communion with the Divine Majesty, and all this to be had for a cordial thankful acceptance: *This is the Lords doing*, and well may it *be marvellous in your eyes*; *Great things hath the Lord done for us, whereof let our souls be glad.* If an host of Angels came from heaven to proclaim these good tidings of great joy to all people, shall not the Congregations of Christians eccho back their *Glory be to God in the highest*, who hath sent *on earth peace*, and shewn such *good will to men*? *Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. Let the Redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. Oh do you praise the Lord for his goodness, and for*

his wonderful works to the children of men; who hath ſhewn mercy to ſuch as ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, and hath broken the gates of braſs and cut the bars of iron in ſunder, and hath ſent his word and healed you, and delivered you from deſtruction. Oh do you ſacrifice the ſacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoycing, Pſal. 107. Call upon your ſouls with the Pſalmiſt in another place, *Bleſs the Lord, oh my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy name: Bleſs the Lord, oh my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diſeaſes; who redeems thy life from deſtruction, and who crowns thee with loving kindneſs and tender mercies,* Pſal. 103. at the beginning. Oh think what a deplorable condition we had been in, if God had left us in the hands of Satan, to whom we had enſlaved our ſelves, and had never lookt after us more. Oh what a dungeon had this world then been! Where we ſhould have lived in darkneſs and fetters, in horrours and torments, and all as but an inlet and paſſage to miſeries infinitely worſe, and altogether unavoidable. But Oh bleſſed, and for ever praiſed be his Name, who hath viſited the earth with his goodneſs, and cauſed the rejoycing light to ſhine in dark and diſconſolate places, and hath proclaimed liberty to the captive, and ſhewn a ſtrong hold, to which he hath called the *Priſoners of hope* to turn themſelves, having laid help on one that is mighty. ſending forth the *priſoners out of the pit by the blood of the Covenant*, Zach. 9. 11. This is that blood which by the Wine in the Sacrament is repreſented to you, yea, which is thereby put into your hands, and given you to drink, in remembrance of that which was once ſhed for you. And ſhall not the hearts-blood of your deareſt Lord warm and revive your ſouls, enflame and advance your love? Will you not now begin that *new ſong* of the heavenly Chore, *aſcribing bleſſing, honour, glory and power to him that ſits upon the throwne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever, who by his blood redeemed us, and makes us kings and prieſts unto God,* Rev. 5. This is that blood to which you owe all that you have or hope for: This quencht thoſe flames, which elſe had fed upon you for ever; This ſatisfied that juſtice, which elſe had laid hold on you for your diſobedience; This purchaſt an inheritance, which ſilver and gold could not buy; *This purgeth the conſcience from dead works,* and makes the ſoul fruitful unto

unto God; This pacifies the Conſcience, and appeaſeth the diſturbances that ſenſe of guilt is apt to raiſe; By this *blood of the Lamb*, it is, *that the Saints* in all their conflicts *do overcome*. And can you with-hold the moſt affectionate hearty thankfulneſs for this precious all-healing blood? Methinks we ſhould even be pained in our ſelves, as not knowing how to give vent enough to our affections, eſpecially when our bleeding Lord is ſet before us. Oh let him wholly poſſeſs your thoughts, and do you view that tranſcendent love which he manifeſted in his whole courſe, but chiefly in the cloſe of it, that all may beget in you ſome anſwerable returns of love. Read, as you have leiſure, thoſe heavenly diſcourſes which were his Farewell Sermons to his Diſciples, and his laſt Prayer for them; which you may find in the 14, 15, 16, 17, Chapters of *John*, and ſee there how love breathes in every line. Follow him to the Garden, and there hearken to his groans, and behold his bloody ſweat, which proclaims him to be *ſick of love*, of a love that would not be quencht by thoſe crimſon ſtreams. No, ſtill he goes on, and go thou after him with the Woman that followed him to his Croſs; and weep not, if thou canſt forbear, whilſt there thou ſeeſt him *die for love*; even for love of thee, poor ſoul, who doſt ſincerely love him. Art thou not aſtoniſht at the thoughts of it? What could the Lord Jeſus ſee in ſuch miſerable worms as we, that ſhould incline him to undergo all this on our behalf? Nay, there's the wonder, he ſaw nothing, and therefore he underwent it. Nothing, did I ſay? yes, he ſaw our guilt and defilement; for which he might have juſtly loathed us: But he ſeeing all this our miſery, was rather moved to a compaſſion for us; Such a compaſſion as never dwelt in mortals breaſt, that he ſhould pity thoſe who pitied not themſelves, and dye to recover thoſe who had even murdered themſelves; yea, that he ſhould die to make them happy, whoſe ſins were the cauſe of his Death, and even merit mercy for ſuch as had no mercy on him, and give *life* to them who took *his* away. All this was voluntarily done by the Son of God, who became Man, on purpoſe that he might die and do all this for the ſons of men. Let Plays and Fictions be hiſt off the ſtage, let Romantick follies be ſhamed into obſcurity: For here is that which alone deſerves the name of *Love*; here's ſuch Truth, as com-

mands our belief; ſuch worth and weight as calls for our regard, and ſuch ſtupendious greatneſs, as may raiſe our wonder. Here behold the power of love in the faireſt diſplay of it, that ever was made to the world, ſince its foundations were firſt laid, beyond which imagination it ſelf cannot aſcend, nay, which falls vaſtly ſhort of it; how vaſtly ſhort then doth expreſſion fall? but yet oh that we could feel as much as that little which we ſpeak! Was it ever before known, that the ſhepherd ſhould lay down his life for his ſheep? not for innocent ſheep, but to reduce wilful ſtraglers to his Fold: That he who was Lord of all, ſhould die for his Subjects? not for obedient Subjects, but for Rebels appointed to the ſlaughter? Thus continue thy meditations, till they have ſo good an effect upon thee, that if Chriſt ſhould appear to thee at this inſtant, as thou art got alone, and ſhould call thee by Name, as once he did *Peter*, and ask thee, *Soul, Loveſt thou me?* thou mighteſt be able truly to return this anſwer, *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* And then to affect thee yet more, conſider of Gods ſaving love in Chriſt particularly revealed to thy ſoul, that he was pleaſed to ſay to thee, *when thou waſt in thy blood, Live*; Calling thee out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, laying hold on thee by his Spirit, and recovering thee to himſelf, when thou waſt running far away from him; and many a time preventing and reſtoring thee by his grace, when otherwiſe thou hadſt utterly ruin'd thy ſelf. Oh praiſe him that he left thee not in Satan's Kingdom, under the power of thy luſts, but with a ſtrong hand and out-ſtretched arm brought thee out of that houſe of bondage, and magnifie his name when thou beholdeſt that blood wherein thy ſins were drowned, as the *Egyptians* in the Red Sea. Oh bleſs his name that he did not ſuffer thee to remain *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, yea, that he did not ſtrike thee dead in them, and ſentence thee to the ſecond death, after which there is life no more. This is a fit ſeaſon for recollecting all the ſpecial mercies of thy life, which God hath ſhewn either to ſoul or body, to thy ſelf or thine, all which thou art to look upon as vouchſaft through Chriſt, which makes the mercy infinitely greater.

And when you have thus endeavoured to get your hearts brim-ful with love and joy, come and let them riſe higher, and boil over at the Table of the Lord. Let no ſadneſs

neſs appear in your looks, nor a tormenting thought by your good will, ſeize upon your hearts this day. Come *loathing* ſin as much as you are able, but come *loving* Chriſt as much; have as *low* thoughts of thy ſelf as thou wilt, and be as *humble* as thou canſt in remembrance of all thy vileneſs, but yet let thy *Soul magnifie the Lord, and thy Spirit rejoyce in God thy Saviour.* Thy Gracious Lord will not upbraid thee with any former unkindneſs and neglect of his love, which thou art heartily aſham'd of and ſorry for. Wherefore though thou maiſt come bluſhing and weeping, yet come not into his preſence daunted and deſparing. He died on purpoſe to eaſe your Souls of thoſe fears, which make you *all your life time ſubject unto bondage.* Will not *you* receive comfort, for whom he hath ſhed his blood that it might be your Cordial? Let him ſee you then improve it this day to that purpoſe: For your health and pleaſure, if it be ſolid, is his delight. And if he would have your joy at any time in this World full, now it is; If you muſt *ever more rejoyce*, this I am ſure, is a fit ſeaſon. This is our moſt ſolemn *Thanks-giving Feaſt.* Oh wonderful! That the commemoration of the *Maſters* death ſhould be the *Servants* Feaſt. It is his pleaſure to have it ſo, and let us thankfully comply therewith. Inſtead of his Vinegar and Gall, he gives us Bread and Wine, and better things than they. Here he made according to his promiſe, *Iſa.* 25. 6. *A feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of Wines on the Lees, of fat things full of Marrow, Wines on the Lees, well refined.* And you may be ſure the Maſter of this Feaſt, who entertains his gueſts with an affection as great as their fare is coſtly, would not have them ſit there ſad and dejected, as if they liked not their proviſions or thought themſelves not welcome. Would it pleaſe you to ſee your friends in ſuch a poſture at your Table? Oh queſtion not your welcome, all ye lovers of Chriſt, but when you are there aſſembled, imagine that you heard him ſay to you, *Eat oh friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, oh beloved.* Here he hath brought you into his Banquetting-Houſe, and his Banner over you ſhall be love. Here will he comfort you with Heavenly *Manna*, and ſtay with Flaggons all you that are ſick of love. You Children of *Abraham*, that come from the ſlaughter of your luſts, here doth your Lord meet you as his type (*Melchiſedeck*) met your Father, *Gen.* 14. 18. Setting before you the Bread and

Wine

Wine for your refreſhment. And here *will he bleſs you*? He ſhall cauſe you to ſit under his ſhadow, and his fruit ſhall be ſweet to your taſt. Here may you expect the moſt comfortable communion with Chriſt, that is to be had in this lower World. Here then *believing in and loving him whom you have not ſeen*, but whom you may here ſee repreſented, do you *rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.*

8. That your hearts may be more heavenly in this work, and ſo more apt to be fill'd with joy, and to break out in praiſe, let me earneſtly deſire you *here to have an eye to a glorified, as well as a Crucified Chriſt*, to remember not only his humiliation, but his exaltation. It was the mind of Chriſt, that his Reſurrection, rather than his birth or death, ſhould conſecrate a weekly thankſgiving, to be obſerved by the Church in all ages, which ſhould be call'd the Lords own day, and be ſpent in his praiſe and ſervice. This being the accompliſhment of his labours, his final victory over death, and the grave and all enemies that did aſſault his own perſon, the memorial whereof muſt therefore needs be moſt rejoycing to his ſervants: And as his Reſurrection cannot be remembred without his birth and death, which muſt of neceſſity precede it, no more can his death be here rightly remembred, without we alſo bear in mind his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion to Glory. Can we remember what he was, and not think what he is? Sad meetings had we made indeed if our Lord had been held under the power of death, if ſuch a thing may be imagined: All the World then might well be in the diſconſolate poſture of the two Diſciples, that were travailing to *Emaus*, crying out, *We truſted this had been he who ſhould have redeemed Iſrael*, Luk. 24. 21. Then would our *faith be vain, we ſhould be yet in our ſins.* But we may now comfort our ſelves, and uſe the Apoſtles gradation, *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? It's Chriſt that died, yea rather that's riſen again, and is even at the right hand of God.* And now with joy let this Reſurrection and Glory be remembred, as being the forerunner of yours, when in your thoughts you have deſcended as low as his Grave, and there ſtand weeping to think how your ſins have ſlain him, imagine you heard ſome Angel beſpeaking you, in almoſt the ſame language that he did the Women at his Sepulchre, *Mar.* 16. 6, 7. *Fear not*

ye,

ye, for I know that you ſeek Jeſus who was crucified; he is not here: for he is riſen as he ſaid, and is gone before you, not into *Galilee*, but into Heaven, *there ſhall you ſee him.* When therefore you ſhall in this Ordinance ſee Chriſt crucified before you, think with your ſelves, *This is the Lamb that was dead, but is alive, and lives for ever.* By the celebrating of this Sacrament, you are to *ſhew forth the the Lord's death till he come.* Remember then he is to *come*, for this ſecond coming would Chriſt have you keep much in your thoughts as well as his firſt. He left not this pledge of his love with his Church, as a dying Man leaves ſome gift with his friends to put them in mind of him whom they ſhall never ſee more; but as one who goes a long journey, leaves his Picture with his wife that ſhe may be mindful of him in his abſence, and be quickned to long after his return. And good reaſon have you to be mindful of the Glory of our Lord, ſince you your ſelves will be ſharers herein, and ſo at once you remember both. Here I told you, you take an earneſt of the everlaſting treaſures, and the conſideration thereof is exceeding neceſſary, to raiſe your value of that which will otherwiſe appear but worthleſs and mean. And conceive of your ſelves as in a journey to that Kingdom, having here taken in by the way to refreſh your ſelves, as travellers are wont to turn in and bait, and like the Prophet, 1 *King.* 19. 8. *In the ſtrength of this meal* you are to go on toward the *Mount of God.* Theſe are proviſions ſent by your *Joſeph*, to ſerve you by the way, till you come home to himſelf. Yet a few more Sacraments, and you ſhall be paſt the need of all. Here are ſome fragrancies and drops of ſweetneſs for the refreſhment of Pilgrims, *till the day breaks, and the ſhadows flee away, when we ſhall get up after our Lord to the Mountains of Myrrhe, and the Hill of Frankincenſe.* Here a Table is ſpread for us in the Wilderneſs, and ſome Cluſters of Grapes preſt into our Cup, 'till we ſhall come to *Canaan*, and enjoy the Vintage. Behold in this tranſaction at the Lord's Table, an Enblem and ſhadow of the future glory; and let your thoughts take advantage from what is here preſented to aſcen to the joyful contemplation thereof; yet within a while, and you who are his welcome Gueſts, ſhall ſit down with *your Maſter at his Table in his Kingdom, and there ſhall taſte of the fruit of the Vine new with him:* and ſhall eat of a *Manna* that is yet hidden

to

to you, and shall exchange your present company for the society of innumerable Angels and perfect Saints. And let this somethimg quiet your minds, though not take off the quickness of your desires, all you holy Souls, who are acted by so noble and strong a passion, that you are impatient of that distance, at which you yet find your selves from him whom you love, and are even weary of the World, where you cannot fully enjoy him, much more of your own hearts, that are so estranged from him; comfort your selves, for within a very short while your eyes shall behold him, and you shall be fully satisfied in your most intimate access to and abode with him. You may look back with joy on the redemption Christ hath wrought for you, and may look before you, and *lift up your heads with joy, as knowing the day* of full and final *Redemption draws nigh.* Only see that you now thirst ardently after that spiritual communion with him which is here attainable, in being possest by him, and closely united to him, *that being joyn'd to the Lord, you may become one Spirit:* This is the blessed, and only possible transubstantiation, to be *transformed into the likeness of Christ*, which is of infinitely more advantage to the believing Soul, than if, according to that monstrous Popish fiction, he should chew the very gross flesh, and swallow the raw blood of Christ? For by this means his *body* would be changed into ours, but by the change I speak of, our *spirits* become like to his. And if now you hold but this Fellowship with Christ in the Spirit, shortly you shall have a *Real Presence*, even to the satisfaction of Sense it self: *Then shall you see him as he is: For you shall be made like to him* in the day of his Appearance. Then indeed shall Sacraments vanish as useless shadows, you having got the Substance, Christ himself. You need then no more behold him in a Glass, but shall see him face to face, and be perfectly changed into his Image. Oh the difference that will be betwixt that clear sight and this dark, alas through our own fault, too dark remembrance! Oh that's the comfort! We shall then have laid by all that stupidity and dulness, which here attends us whatever we are about. That full view of our blessed Lord will for ever cure us of all coldness and unbelief, and ravish us into one eternal affectionate admiration of Divine Love. If that joy which arose from Faith and Love, whilst he was not seen, was *unspeakable and full of glory*,

glory, how inconceivable, how tranſcendently glorious muſt that be which ſhall ariſe from his immediate ſight? If it be ſuch a precious priviledge to have a right to Heaven here ſolemnly given us, what will it be to enter upon actual poſſeſſion? Oh then, Chriſtians, whilſt you are remembring Chriſt at his Table, let it rejoyce your hearts to conſider, that he is remembring you at his Father's right hand, and thither will ſhortly exalt you. All you whom the King of Glory now eſpouſeth to himſelf as it were by Proxy, as Princes take Wives by their Ambaſſadors, remember that the day is haſtning, when your Marriage ſhall be more publickly and triumphantly ſolemnized: When all you bleſſed ones ſhall be call'd to the great Marriage-Supper of the Lamb. *Yet a very little while, and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry*: And do you now get your ſouls mounted as high as you can climb, by all the means that are afforded you, and ſtand ever wiſhly looking, and diligently preparing for his appearance; and never ſlack your watch, nor let your expectations cool, till either you ſee him coming in the Clouds, or your ſelves ſhall be taken up beyond them.

With ſome ſuch Meditations as theſe, which I have ſuggeſted to you under each Head, let your thoughts be taken up whilſt you are imployed in this duty, as you ſhall find your ſelves moſt inclined, and as God's Spirit ſhall direct you: For you need not confine your ſelves as to the method and form, but rather let your affections have their free courſe. Only ſee that you watch narrowly over your hearts through the whole work, that deadneſs and diſtractions may not poſſeſs you. Keep up a ſtrong ſenſe of God's preſence with you, and often lift up your hearts to him for life and quickning. And let all the Powers of your Souls be ſummoned up and engaged in this action, with all poſſible vigour and cloſeneſs. Let your minds be kept clear from ſadning, and from impertinent thoughts, that you may *attend upon the Lord without diſtraction*, and be more capable of thoſe ſweet foretaſts of his goodneſs, which may be as a certain pledg of your everlaſting enjoyment of all that he hath in ſtore for his people.

9. Laſtly, let me in a word or two direct you to *be careful in the exerciſe of brotherly love*. I need not ſtand, I hope, to repeat the advice I gave you, to get all breaches made up betwixt your ſelves and brethren, to do all that in you lies

to

to obtain peace; and if that cannot be had, yet to forgive all injuries that have been done you, and to cleanse your minds from rancour and malice, and all desire of revenge; to this let the *love of Christ constrain you.*

And moreover, let your hearts be let out with a sincere and strong affection, towards all your Fellow-members of that body, whereof Christ is the Head. A pleasant sight it will be to your Master who is in Heaven, to look down upon you his Disciples, and see you here feasting together in mutual love and delight, in the remembrance of all that love which he hath shewn to you, and in the joyful expectation of what farther he hath promised. And whilst your love is stirred up to Christ himself, it cannot chuse but be imparted to his friends that are in sight; such who sincerely love him, on whom he hath set his heart, and hath shed on them his Spirit, whereby they are made like to him, and therefore must needs be lovely in your eyes to whom *Christ is precious*; as being also by this same Spirit made like to your selves; and when in your joyning with them in this Sacred action, you remember that these shall be your everlasting companions in the joy of your Lord, and shall there joyn with you in sounding forth his praises; this will farther engage you to them, as being heirs together of the grace of God, and will work in you the beginnings of that love which will hereafter be perfect and perpetual. Whilst your love is built upon such right and catholick principles as these, being placed upon a Christian as a Christian, you hold a communion in the Spirit with all true Christians throughout the world; though your affections will be most sensibly enlarged to those that you know, and with whom you hold a local communion in the worship of God. And your joynt assembling at this Table is a badge of your mutual love, and an engagement to the firm continuance of it. Here are you made *to drink into one Spirit*, by which you were Baptized into *one Body*, according to that Text I named, 1 *Cor.* 12.13. This *Sacrament* is, if I may so call it, an *Holy Philtre*, whereby Believers are united in more fervent love to their common Head, and to one another. The blood of Christ is the only Cement and Soder of Souls. And this is that Christian love which they are taught of God, to which they are inclined by their new nature, and which will easily be brought into exercise, where the Grace is first wrought in the heart; wherefore it's needless to stay longer

hereon,

hereon, having alſo ſpoke ſomewhat largely to it before. Only one thing let me ſuggeſt, before I conclude this, namely, that you take care to give a practical demonſtration of this love, by *contributing according to your abilities to the neceſſities of the poor members of Chriſt*. This is a ſacrifice wherewith God is well pleaſed; a work never out of ſeaſon, but now moſt ſeaſonable; being an evidence not only of your compaſſion to the poor, but of the ſtedfaſtneſs of your belief in Chriſt and his Promiſes, and of your thankfulneſs for his bounty; therefore you find both theſe mentioned together, *Heb.* 13. 15, 16. *as we muſt offer thanks, ſo we muſt not forget to do good and communicate*. To quicken you to this charity, both now and any other time, when fit objects are preſented, let me only deſire you to imagine to your ſelves, that the Lord Jeſus, who was willing to part with his blood for you, and thinks not an infinite glory too great to give you, upon moſt eaſie terms, that even he comes to you in one of his neceſſitous members, to ſee what you can find in your hearts to beſtow upon him; if you that have Eſtates think he deſerves nothing, let him have nothing; if he deſerve but a little, give him but a little; if your luſts have more right to your riches than he, then let your luſts have them rather than he. Let Chriſt in his members ſtarve, whilſt pride and luxury are maintained, if you think this be juſt. If you can improve your Eſtates better ſome other way, take what you think the moſt gainful courſe. For remember, Chriſt himſelf needs not any thing you have or can do, only he'll try the kindneſs of your hearts. His is the Earth, and the fulneſs thereof, and even his poor Servants can he ſufficiently provide for without you. Wherefore if you give not willingly and cheerfully, you may keep your money to your ſelf, for any good that an extorted charity is like to do you. But remember alſo, you will be ſure to loſe and leave all that, which God hath not, one way or other, but by giving it to him you ſend it before you; and when all things here below fail, you ſhall enjoy it with infinite advantage in the everlaſting Habitations. And let this ſuffice by way of Direction for your preparation to, and carriage in receiving. A few words for your behaviour afterwards, and I ſhall come to a concluſion.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Directions for the Duty after the Sacrament.

1. WHen you come home, get alone, and bleſs God for the liberty and opportunity of a Sacrament, which he hath afforded you, and for all the priviledges that are thereby conferr'd upon you. And let your Souls chew the Cud, and retain the Savour of thoſe pleaſant things you have been entertained with; keep them ſtill lifted up, and exceedingly gladded, in the ſenſe of that love which you have this day been celebrating and taſting, in the belief of that pardon which you have received, in the hope of that Grace and Glory which have been aſſured to you. Meditations of Heaven, and the exerciſe of thankfulneſs, are now very proper works. Conſider alſo what you have done, what an obligation you have laid upon your ſelf, how you are no longer your own man, having made a reſignation of your ſelf to God by Jeſus Chriſt: And beg the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit, to enable you to ſtedfaſtneſs and perſeverance in this holy Covenant whilſt life ſhall laſt; and beſeech him, that the Ordinance you have been made partaker of, may become effectual to your Souls to all thoſe ends that it was deſigned for, and which are attainable by it. *Think it not enough to read over theſe things, I intreat thee, but do accordingly, and now betake thy ſelf to Conſideration and Prayer to thoſe ends I have expreſt.* Review moreover, what your miſcarriages have been, and humbly beg of God to forgive either want of due preparation, or coldneſs and diſtractions; that your hearts have not been affected ſuitably to the importance and excellency of the duty, and the Majeſty of him with whom you have herein had to do. And be heartily thankful for any meaſure of life and affection, any raiſedneſs and comfort that God hath been pleaſed to vouchſafe you. And here by the way let me caution all humble Chriſtians to beware of a miſtake to which they are too prone: To wit, to judge of their profiting in this and other duties by their preſent feeling, and ſo to think they get no good, except their Souls are as it were lift up and raviſht with ſenſible joys; and theſe only they take for evidences of God's acceptance, and the having of communion with him. But by this means you will often plunge your ſelves into needleſs ſorrows,

ſorrows and load your ſelves with unjuſt cenſures; and which is worſe, you will hereby become leſs thankful to God, as thinking you have received little advantage, becauſe you found not thoſe delights you expected; and will be in danger of becoming weary of the work, and ready to throw it off, as thinking it unprofitable. Wherefore to avoid theſe ill conſequences, and the miſtake that begets them, conſider well, *That it is the uprightneſs and ſincerity of your hearts in the performance of your duty, which may adminiſter moſt ground of comfort to you when you reflect upon it*: For be aſſured if you have this ornament, you were really acceptable to him that lookt down upon you, through this acceptance might not be teſtified with the giving in of any extraordinary joy. Let it not then trouble you, as if God was not well pleaſed with you, becauſe your affections were not raiſed up to an higher pitch, ſince he doth not look ſo much at fits of paſſion, as at the ſteady bent, and tenour of the Soul. Nor think becauſe you miſt of great joys, that you had no favour from, nor Communion with God: For conſider again, *that the trueſt Communion with God, is to enjoy the communications of his grace to your ſouls whereby you are made conformable to him*: And you may enjoy theſe ſaving influences of the Spirit, when you cannot feel his more abundant conſolations. Moreover, the fruit of this Ordinance is not ſo much to be diſcerned at preſent, as in your after-converſation. For the great benefit you are to expect, being to receive farther meaſures of Grace from the Holy Spirit accompanying theſe means, it can be well known what Grace you have received, till you come to the exerciſe of it, when temptations ſhall aſſault you. And to allude to the Apoſtle's words in another caſe, tho this Ordinance may *not at preſent be joyous, yet it may afterward yield the peaceabl fruit of righteouſneſs* to thoſe that are converſant therein. And laſtly, if you are but ſincere, as I ſaid, in your covenanting with God, it is your duty to believe, that you have this day received from him a Seal to the promiſe of pardon and eternal life, and in this belief may you take much rational and ſolid comfort, which otherwiſe you are not like to find: And this is the ordinary way whereby the Spirit conveys comfort to the Soul, firſt working in you a belief, that the promiſes of God are in themſelves moſt true, and enlightning you to the knowledge of your own ſouls, and the enabling you to apply

these promises to your selves as being such to whom they belong. Thus the Apostle tells us, their rejoycing was from the testimony their Conscience gave of their simplicity and godly sincerity, 2 *Cor.* 1 12. Wherefore you are not so much to expect any extraordinary immediate assurance from the Spirit that you are the Lords; but see to get good grounds for your faith, and so to have your hearts fill'd with *peace and joy in believing*. Yet do not misinterpret what I have said, thence to indulge your selves into any sloth or dulness, to content your selves with the bare doing of the work, without heeding the frame of your heart therein: No, but take as much pains as you can, to raise them to the greatest sensibleness and affection; and if you do so, you may reasonably expect to find much sweetness and satisfaction in the work it self: but my meaning in this caution is, that you should not look so much at the feeling of extraordinary comforts, as at the integrity of your hearts in vowing your selves to God, and the continuing stedfastness of your resolutions to be true to these vows.

2. And that's the next thing I would exhort you to, *even to discover this inward truth and sincerity, by your future holy and exact walking*; This is that which must crown all the rest. I may say to you as *Moses* to the *Israelites*, Deut. 26. 16, 17. *You have this day avouched the Lord to be your God to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes; and the Lord hath avouched you to be his peculiar people*, and you have promised to take Christ for your Husband and Lord, to live in love and obedience to him, as you hope to be saved by him. One thing now remains, *that you go and do likewise*. Say with the Psalmist, *I have sworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments*, Psal. 119. 106. Now you have been remembring him *that suffered in the flesh, arm your selves with this mind, no longer to live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God*, 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2, 3. Let it not happen to you according to the Proverb, *the Dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the Sow that was washt, to her wallowing in the mire. If God have spoke peace to your souls, turn not you again to folly.* Call to mind particularly what sins you confest and promised to forsake, and do accordingly. You that have been guilty of drunkenness or gluttony, fornication and wantonness, pride or covetousness, be so no more; you that have been wont to spend your time in idleness and vanity,

in

in sinful company or excessive recreations, spend it so no more; you that have been wont to give way to your exorbitant passions, and suffered them to break forth in unseemly actions and language, do so no longer. You that are Masters or Servants, Parents or Children, Husbands or Wives, consider well what particular duties your relations call for, and be faithful in the performance of them. You that are Subjects obey them that are set over you in the Lord. Towards your neighbours, and all with whom you converse, be just, and honest, loving and courteous, avoiding all backbiting, lying and slandering, all foolish and filthy speaking. Be compassionate and charitable to all that need your help in one sort or another. Be conscientious for the future in the more immediate service of God: Be frequent and serious in his worship, both in publick and private, alone and with your families. Beware of swearing and cursing, or of taking the holy name of God or Christ in vain; make not mention of him in your common discourse without due reverence, and that you are not like to have, if at every turn you are crying, *Oh God* and *Oh Lord*, as is the custom of careless People. Profane no more Lords-days, as you may have formerly done, but improve them to your souls good. What ever talent you have, of wealth, wit, time or honour, employ it to his glory who entrusted you therewith; in all things study to please God, and so commit your selves and all concernments to his Will, and quietly submit to all his dealings with you without murmuring or repining. To a sincere endeavour after all this, you have bound your selves by the Sacrament, where you have taken God to be your God, and have profest your selves his people. Wherefore, I beseech you beware of that dangerous, and yet too common mistake, *To think that weighty action terminates in it self, and that all's done when the work's over.* I have endeavoured all along to prevent this false conceit, and I care not how oft I inculcate it: for if this be not removed, all my labour will be lost, and so will yours too, yea, and worse than lost: Your receiving of Sacraments will then prove but an idle unprofitable Ceremony, and will help forward your damnation rather than your salvation, whilst you heed not the design of it, nor improve it to its due end. What would you think of that woman, that when she had promised a man to be his wife and was solemnly married to

him in the face of the Congregation, ſhould think there was now nothing more required of her, but that ſhe might go whither ſhe liſt, and live with whom ſhe pleaſed? Even juſt ſuch is your folly and groſs abſurdity, who when you have been in the moſt ſolemn manner engaging your ſelves to God, and have taken the Sacrament upon it, that you will live in obedience to him, then think that you may go away and live as you liſt. Beware how you make ſuch miſtakes as theſe: for believe it, God's in earneſt whether you are or not: If you would not have him take you at your word, you had better never have made ſuch fair promiſes. Since then the great deſign of this duty is, to be an engagement to, and an help for holineſs of life, I ſhall finiſh this Treatiſe with a direction or two for the promoting and carrying on the ſame.

1. And to that end firſt let me adviſe you, *to be frequent in conſidering the engagement you have hereby laid upon your ſelves*, and let that hold and quicken you to faithfulneſs. This is the principal thing which we are to do in order to the due improvement of Sacraments to our advantage, even to remember often, what a ſtrict Covenant we thereby entred into that by remembrance thereof we may be the more aw'd and reſtrain'd from doing any thing againſt it. Thus ought you to make uſe of your Baptiſm, which is, I doubt too ſeldome minded; often you ſhould think, how abſolutely you are bound to take him for your God, to whom you were ſo early devoted, remember the end of it, and now ſee to anſwer and attain it, which you may find fully expreſt, *Rom.* 6. 3, 4. *Therefore are we buried with Chriſt by Baptiſm into his Death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by (or for) the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.* Whenever you ſee a Child baptized, let it bring to your mind, that you were once ſo dedicated to God, and admitted into his Church; and then think how you ought to walk, who have ſuch a Bond upon you. And thus improve the Lord's Supper, where you have perſonally owned, and renewed your Covenant with God. Eſpecially make this uſe of it when you meet with any temptation to ſin whatever, or when you begin to grow careleſs and remiſs in your carriage. If old companions ſhould ſet upon you, and entice you, or if your own heart ſhould incline you to any former ſinful courſes, then ſay with your ſelves, how can I do this, and go back

from

from the Vow that I have made? No, I muſt not, I will not; the Oath of God is upon me, and I ſhall be forſworn with the living and true God. How ſeverely will he avenge himſelf on all ſuch diſſemblers? Wicked *Herod* ſeemed ſo fearful of Perjury that he permitted the murdering of a Prophet to avoid it, and ſhall I be guilty of it, rather that deſtroy my luſts, God's and my own greateſt enemies? Moſt juſtly may I argue, that for *my oaths ſake, and for thoſe that ſate with me*, I will not do thus: For not one of my fellow-communicants but might witneſs to God againſt me, that they ſaw me make a Covenant with him. And God himſelf who ſtood over me will be witneſs, as well as Judge. How then ſhould I appear before him with this heinous guilt upon me? Wherefore, *Depart from me, ye evil Doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God.* If you'll come along with me, and walk in the holy path, come and welcom; but never hope to draw me back again with you, into thoſe ways that have coſt me ſo dear, and which I have proteſted againſt. I am now no company for you: *For I have taken the Sacrament.* Depart Satan, and tempt me not from my allegiance to my Lord and Maſter, I will not forſake him; I have obliged my ſelf afreſh to be a Chriſtian, a ſworn enemy to thy Kingdom, and a faithful Souldier under Chriſt's Banner, therefore depart from me: *For I have taken the Sacrament.* And think moreover with thy ſelf, Hath God been ſo gracious to me as to vouchſafe me a pardon for all former tranſgreſſions, and to ſeal it to me at his Table, and ſhall I go, and wilfully run upon the ſcore again? Should I thus turn his grace into wantonneſs and abuſe his patience, how juſtly might I fear that his anger will be kindled againſt me, and that he will no more have mercy upon me? He, I am ſure, will be true to his promiſes, and ſhall I be falſe to mine, and ſo fall under his threatnings? And after this manner quicken your ſelves to duty, whenever you are apt to grow liſtleſs to any part of God's ſervice; and alſo quiet your ſpirits, when they are ready to riſe up in tumult and diſcontent under any croſs that befalls you. Then think, *I have reſigned my ſelf to God as a loving Father, let him do with me what he pleaſe; therefore be ſtill my heart and rebel not againſt, nor murmur at his righteous will.* If you can but thus find your ſelves more ſtrongly bent againſt ſin, and better able to put off temptations to it, this is the ſureſt evidence you can have of profiting by the Sacrament.

And beware of imagining, that any ſpace of time can wear out the force of that obligation, which is here laid upon you; which, as unreaſonable as it is, one would think was the opinion of multitudes: For they'll be very demure, and ſolemn a little before they go to the Communion, and a day or two after, but within a very little while, all ſeems forgotten, and they are juſt ſuch as they were before. But for certain, God forgets not their promiſes, though they do, nor will he forget their breach of them, as they will one day find to their coſt, if they take not another courſe. The *bonds* you are entred into to render homage and obedience to God, will never be *cancelled*: For this is a debt you will owe as long as you live, though you are always paying it. Baptiſm will be as ſtrong an engagement upon you to godlineſs when you are ſixty, as when you are but ſixteen. And the ſame ſtrictneſs the Lords Supper binds you to for a day, to the ſame doth it bind you all your days. Think not what an horrible thing it would be to run into drunkenneſs, whoredom, or quarreling, the ſame day you had received it, and know your ſin is little leſs hainous, though it be a month or two, or twenty after it: For this breaks your oath as well as that. If the Wife be guilty of Adultery twenty years after marriage her crime is as great, as if it had been within a week after: for ſhe had oblig'd her ſelf to conjugal fidelity, as long as ſhe and her Husband ſhould live; and thus your Covenant with God is not for a Month, or Year only, but for your whole lives. If you ſhould never but once have opportunity to receive the Sacrament, this would ever after remain a forcible engagement upon you: But yet God in his wiſdom and good providence hath ordered, that this duty ſhould be frequently repeated, that it might the more work upon, and affect your minds, who are prone to be ſo forgetful and dull. Remember then the matter is now out of your hands; you have given away your ſelves to God, and cannot revoke this gift, ſince indeed you gave him nothing, but what was his own before. *After theſe vows there is no inquiry to be made*, whether they ſhould be kept or not. Yet, thus much I'll ſay to you, if you can find a greater portion and ſurer friend than God, a better Maſter than Chriſt, better work than his ſervice, better wages than life eternal, you may take your choice: For I would wiſh you to nothing for your hurt or loſs, nor

doth

doth God you may be ſure, that bleſſed Being, who wants nothing out of himſelf, nor envies his Creatures any thing that's truly good for them: but till you can thus better diſpoſe of your ſelves, keep your firſt love, and if you will keep it till then, I ſhall never queſtion your perſeverance to the laſt.

And as you are thus to improve this Ordinance to quicken you to, and help you in your duty, ſo may you make advantage of it for your comfort, by remembring how God ſtands engaged to you by that Covenant to which he hath here ſet his ſeal, and which he will be ſure to perform to you that depart not from him. With this conſideration repel all temptations to exceſſive doubtings and deſpair. When the remembrance of former ſins is ready to overwhelm you, have recourſe to your ſealed pardon, and confidently take the comfort it affords you. When you find the remnants of corruption yet ſo ſtrong within you, that you are afraid you ſhall never hold out, remember the Holy Ghoſt is in Covenant with you to aſſiſt you in your combat, and will bring you off Conqueror, if you throw not away your weapons: And let this encourage you the more to beg his aſſiſtance, yea in all your addreſſes to God let it ſtrengthen your faith to apprehend him, as in covenant with you. And if you are ſurprized by any ſin, yet whilſt it's matter of grief and ſhame to you, and you are reſolv'd to be more watchful for the time to come, let it not caſt you into ſuch a ſorrow as tends only to diſquiet and conſume your ſpirits; but remember God hath aſſured you through Chriſt the forgiveneſs of ſuch weakneſſes, and they ſhall not put you out of Covenant with him; but know, if you are hereupon a whit the more encouraged to any ſin, it is a very great ſign that this promiſe of pardon at preſent belongs not to you. In a word, what ever difficulties you are plunged into, relating to Soul or Body, let this ſtill uphold you, to conſider, that God hath engag'd himſelf to be with you in all eſtates and conditions, and to order all things, ſo that the iſſue of them ſhall be for your advantage. And thus by a frequent conſideration of your own engagements at the Lord's Table, and of the priviledges thereby conferr'd upon you, you will find your ſelves not only comforted and cheared, but very much advantaged for the walking on more ſteadily in the ways of holineſs.

2. And to the ſame end my next counſel is, *that the Lord*

Jesus, whom you have here been remembring, may ever be fresh in your thoughts. Let not your remembrance of him be confin'd to Sacrament Seasons, but let him ever dwell in your hearts by faith and love. Set his example before you, and labour *to walk as he walkt, who* counted it his *meat and drink to be doing his Fathers will.* Behave your self as you believe he would have done, was he in your case. Consider how meek and lowly he was: How little he regarded, yea how much he contemned the riches, honours and applause of the World, and learn you to value them at the same rate. Consider how patient he was in suffering; how courteous and gentle to all, to the vilest sinners and his bitterest enemies, doing hurt to none, but seeking the good of all: Copy out this lesson also. Willingly deny your selves, take up your cross and follow him. Grudge not to be conformed to him, though in suffering it self, and complain not till you are in a worse case than he was, who had not where to lay his head. It's like you think, if Christ was on earth, you'd follow him, though but in company of poor Women and fisher-men; and though the most of the World should laugh at you for so doing; why know, he'll take it as well at your hands, if you will but tread in his foot-steps, and adhere faithfully to his interest, though it should cost you the loss of all you had, and of life itself. And let the *death* of Christ be much in your thoughts; let the love of God which was herein shewn, be your daily, delightful study, and ever leave a sweet tincture upon your Spirits, that by the power of love you may be moved and carried on in the whole of your duty: Let this shame drive you from sin, let this make you laborious and unwearied in his service. When you are set upon by a temptation, stay so long as to set a bleeding Saviour before you: and think how you have much such a case now before you as the *Jews* once had; to wit whether *Christ* or *Barrabas* should be preferr'd; whether your lust should be subdued, or your Lord crucified afresh; If you approve of the *Jews* choice in this case, you had best imitate them. If that which would murder your soul deserve to be spared, rather than he who died to save it, then go on, *give Christ a stab*, and sin boldly. Consider further how Christ by his death hath acquired a title to you, so that you *must glorifie him both with body and soul, as being not your own, but bought with a price. Bought* you are, not out of the hands of the Father, that you

you ſhould now have liberty to ſin againſt him, but out of the hands of Satan, that being *free from ſin*, you may become *ſubject to God, and the ſervants of righteouſneſs*. How wilfully blind are they who take the more liberty in ſin, from the conſideration of that death, which was undergone to *redeem us from a vain converſation*? 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Where's that man's reaſon and ingenuity, who when he was fallen into his maſters diſpleaſure, and brought into favour again by the great induſtry of the Son, ſhould think he might now ſafely diſobey his maſter? Though the Son pitied the ſervant ſo much, that he was loth to ſee him periſh, yet he loves his Father ſo well, that he never purchas'd an allowance for his diſobedience; and indeed the ſervants *diſobedience* is his *deſtruction*. Chriſt died once to ſave the penitent, but he'll never die more to ſave thoſe that remain wilfully diſobedient. Conſider alſo, Chriſt by his death hath purchaſt abundant grace for the ſupply of all your wants, and now being at the Fathers right hand, hath full power to give out of this ſtore, wherefore make uſe of him to obtain the ſame. Even as the *Egyptians* received food from *Pharaoh* by the hands of *Joſeph*, ſo much you receive all you have from the Father by his Son Jeſus. Let then the very *life you live in the fleſh be by faith in the Son of God*. By earneſt deſires vented in fervent prayers, be ever deriving vertue and vigour from him your head. Be as deſirous and craving as you are neceſſitous, as hungry as you are empty, that the good God, according to the riches of his grace, may furniſh you with all plenty of ſpiritual bleſſings, till you ſhall come up to the *meaſure of the ſtature of Chriſt's own fulneſs*, Eph. 4. 13.

3. If you would thus grow in grace, *Be diligent in the uſe of all the means of grace which Chriſt hath afforded, and let them be uſed and improved as means*. You muſt, I have told you, be much in earneſt Prayer to God in the name of Chriſt, for whatever you are wanting in. Let not one day paſs without the practice of this duty; you that have Families call them together, and pray with them morning and evening. If you neglect this, how little do you differ from thoſe Heathens who *call not upon God*, and upon whom he will *pour out his wrath*? Be diligent in attending to the publick preaching of the Word, and prepare your ſelves beforehand, with a reſolution to obey what ſhall be made known to you to be the will of God, and beg his bleſſing on what

you

you hear. Consider when you come home, wherein you are particularly concern'd in what you have heard, and accordingly follow it. Setting against that sin, or upon that duty that you are thereby convinc't of. When you can get time, spend it in reading Gods Word, and good Books, which may explain and enforce that Word. Especially you that have not much time on week-days, spend the remainder of the Lords day, after publick worship in some such good employment, and waste it not in idleness: No nor an hour at any other time. Read also to and with your Family, and ponder it afterwards, that it may be more profitable to you. Often discourse one with another about the matters of your souls, soberly and seriously; that you may afford each other what help you can. It would be exceeding well, if when you sit with your neighbours, you would be thus employed in holy savoury conference to the use of edifying, rather than in idle chatting and talking of persons, and things that concern you not. But especially they who are of the same family, and are more neerly related, have more opportunity and engagement hereto, and should be *admonishing one another daily, and provoking to love and good works.* For the Lords Supper, I have already directed you at large, and I hope you will practise answerably, and be frequent therein, not ordinarily neglecting any opportunity when you are call'd to it. But as I desire you not to neglect these exercises of Religion, so on the other hand as earnestly I would wish you to beware of resting in them, as thinking all Religion is confin'd to them, and so becoming less careful of your carriage, as to justice, temperance, inward piety, and all vertuous actions. Methinks the wretched error of those Sects that throw off all external duties of worship, and cry up themselves as above Ordinances, may teach this wholesom lesson to all professing Christians, to beware of resting in these things and framing to themselves a Religion out of them. These I grant are parts of obedience to God: for he hath commanded them, and they are ways for the excercise and encrease of our graces, and to be as helps to godliness; but to think that they give any discharge from the practice of godliness, and make amends for sins we are loth to leave, for which we do as it were compound with God by these formalities, making sin our pleasure, and his service a penance for it; these are conceits so gross, that methinks none but a Papist or one willingly ignorant, should entertain them. Religion is no road of per-

formances

formances, but a new nature attended with a new life: It is the Subjection of the ſoul to the will of God, expreſſing it ſelf in all commanded acts of obedience; an eager and ingenuous purſuance after the bleſſed God in all thoſe ways wherein he is to be found, and whereby he communicates himſelf to the ſoul of Man; ſo that there is no contradiction betwixt inward holineſs and outward duties, but much what the ſame relation, that there is betwixt *life* and eating, breathing and motion: For in theſe the divine life is expreſt, exerciſed and nouriſhed. But to think that Sacraments, Prayers and Hearing, *&c.* may ſerve turn without any inward holineſs and univerſal ſincere obedience, is as if a man ſhould think, that the forced motion of a Puppet, ſhould make it paſs for a living creature; that great promiſes may paſs for performances, and that knowing what we muſt do, and talking of it, may ſerve inſtead of doing what we are taught. Let them lay this ſeriouſly to heart, who, when their practices are ungodly and looſe, think to ſave all by keeping their Church, and ſaying their Prayers: and all ſuch who make more ado about the externals in devotion, than about the right ordering of their hearts and lives, whereas all our devotions ſhould tend to better theſe.

4. If you would make good the promiſes you have made at the Lords Table, to live a ſtrict and godly life, you will find it of ſingular importance, yea of flat neceſſity, *to retain a great watchfulneſs over all your way.* Ever keep up a ſenſe of thedanger you are in, by reaſon of the frailty of your nature, the deceitfulneſs of your hearts, and the many temptations you are every where expoſed to; and therefore let this care ſecretly run through the whole courſe of your actions to beware of being ſurprized by ſin therein. In all employments, companies and affairs ſtill keep up this watch, and think before-hand, where your danger is greateſt, where you are moſt apt to be overtaken, and there place the ſtrongeſt guard. Set a watch, over your eyes, ears, appetites, tongues, hearts and hands, that you be not by them betrai'd into any miſcarriage. When you find your ſelf endangered by a preſent temptation, then have ſome ſolid reaſon ready at hand to repel it, with ſtore whereof you ſhould always be furniſh'd with reaſons drawn from God, Chriſt, Heaven or Hell, or from your ſacramental engagements, as I ſhewed before; and be ſure, have a ſtrong reſolution to check the firſt riſings and beginnings of ſin, before it have gone ſo far, that your judgment is brib'd and blinded by your

your affections, and have ſpeedy recourſe to the God of all grace, that he would ſend you help from above *Conſideration*, *Reſolution* and *Prayer*, are three weapons wherewith the Chriſtian Souldier may do wonders againſt the talleſt ſons of *Anack*, that ſhall aſſault him in his way to *Canaan*. Often take account of your ſelves, and review your behaviour in actions that are paſt; and let one days experience ſtill teach you how to live the next better. But upon the ſenſe of any miſcarriage, let not your guilt drive you farther from God, and put you into unprofitable vexations and horrors, but preſently make haſt to the throne of Grace; get your peace made with God thorow Chriſt, and renew your watch with more diligence than ever, but always with the moſt humble and abſolute dependance upon divine aſſiſtance. 'Tis too probable, that ſome lazy wretches will here fly out, as *Naaman* in a rage did againſt the Prophet, when he heard he muſt waſh ſeven times in *Jordan* for the cure of his Leproſie, which he thought would have been done with a word ſpeaking: ſo perhaps you'll tell me, *that you had thought receiving of the Sacrament would ſo have killed your luſts, and cleanſed your hearts, that you need have been at little care about them afterward, and will be ready to ask, what good you get by it, if you muſt take all this paine notwithſtanding.* You ſlothful ſouls, may you not as well ask what good you get by Chriſts death, and the giving of the Spirit? Since notwithſtanding both theſe, you muſt take pains, or elſe you are never like to be ſaved. For know, God will have you employ the faculties he has given you, and the work of Grace is to heal your faculties, and enable them for their proper employments. He that made you reaſonable creatures, will make you holy and happy as ſuch, and the help which he affords, is to bring you to diligence, and aſſiſt you therein, and by that means to ſave you. Thus Sacraments are only profitable to the diligent and induſtrious, their uſe being to quicken and ſtrengthen, but they are no refuges for the ſlothful, no encouragement to idleneſs. Never think that God will make ſuch a way to Heaven, that you may walk in it without uſing your legs. 'Tis *you* that muſt *do* the things required, though it be by *Chriſt ſtrengthning you*, for whoſe ſake alſo your frailties are forgiven. Wherefore let me renew my advice, that at all times, and in all things you would be watchful, and maintain an holy jealouſie over thoſe hearts, that have too often ſhewn what they have in them.

them. Take this for the greateſt work you have to do in the world, to beware of ſin, and to be careful to pleaſe God, as the Souldiers whole work is to ſerve his General, and the Servants to obey his Maſter; yea more abſolutely than ſo ought a creature to ſtudy his Maſters will, and account this work your greateſt happineſs. So avoid ſin, and all occaſions and appearances of it, as you would do the plague in a viſited Town; and be as careful to watch all opportunities of doing good both to the ſouls and bodies of others, as men ordinarily are of laying hold on their gain. Often ask your ſelves, wherein God is honoured by you, or others profited, and be aſhamed to live to no better purpoſe than to eat and drink, to ſleep and dreſs your ſelves for work or play. And do not object againſt this conſtant watchfulneſs, that it will take up all your time, and hinder your neceſſary employments: For by uſing it a while, it will grow even natural to you, and will no more hinder you in your affairs, than it hinders a traveller in his journey, to take heed of running into bogs and ditches. Is it any hard matter to be always careful, leſt you ſhould hurt your bodies? Wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, cannot you keep up this care, and yet follow your buſineſs well enough? Why then can you not take the ſame heed of your ſouls with as little trouble or hindrance?

5. To keep you in this watchfulneſs, and guide you in an exact circumſpect walking, it will be exceeding profitable for you, *at all times to retain upon your minds a very awful ſenſe of the preſence of the moſt holy God.* Whatever you are about, remember he obſerves you, and ponders all your paths, though you perceive not him. Wherefore always order and behave your ſelves as before him. Speak your words as in his hearing; Spend your time, and do all actions as in his ſight. You may eaſier run from under the heavens than out of his eye. And conſider he do's not only look on you, but narrowly regard you, and concern himſelf with you, being highly diſpleaſed when you run into ſin, and takes delight in your holy converſation. In whatever company you are, be not drawn away by them in a kind of flaſhy humour, as if the general looſneſs and jollity did engage you to conform to them, but remember, God is in the midſt of you, who never gives you a diſpenſation to be wicked, and whom it more behoves you to pleaſe, than all the world beſide, tho avoid all enſnaring company as much as poſſible. Let this keep you from fear

or

or ſhame, when you are call'd to ſpeak againſt ſin, or for God and holineſs: *He's near that will juſtifie you, you may therefore ſet your face as a flint.* When you are alone, think not you may ſin the more ſecurely: For God is with you, and eyes all your motions as if he had none but you to mind. In your addreſſes to God, a ſenſe of his nearneſs will much awaken and affect you, and is one of the beſt helps againſt wandring thoughts that you can have. Beware of being ſo far ſwallowed up with the noiſe and hurry of buſineſs or pleaſures, as not to attend to him that ſtands over you. He that is preſent every where ſhould be remembred at all times. Read to this purpoſe, *Pſal.* 139. Such a powerful habitual ſenſe of a preſent God ſhould you work into your minds, that you may walk as before him, even when you do not actually think of him: as a Servant is all day doing that work which his Maſter would have him, though he may not half that time be thinking of him: So though it be needful that you ſhould often actually think of God, yet above all, ſee that you never ſo forget him, as to do that which is diſpleaſing to him; And, to conclude this, in any doubtful action let this be one rule that you go by, not to do that, which whilſt you are about, you dare not boldly think of Gods preſence.

6. The laſt thing I ſhall ſay to you for the carrying on of an holy life, to which you are bound by the Sacrament, is, *That you be much in ſerious meditation of the laſt things, Death, Judgment, and Eternity.* The frequent and lively thoughts of theſe will have a mighty influence upon your whole courſe. To conſider your latter end, is both a diſcovery of, and the way to wiſdom. Live every day, as he that knows not whether he hath another day to live. Think often, *What if I had but another month or year to ſpend in the world, how ſtrictly and holily ſhould I then live that time? How careful ſhould I be of my thoughts, words and actions? How thrifty of my time? How ſerious and affectionate in all my approaches to God? How ready and willing to do or receive good? Why let me now live after this exact manner, ſince it may be I have not ſo much as a month or year to come. However very much I am ſure I have not, and my preparations, be they never ſo ſoon, will not be loſt.* Let others funeral put you in mind of yours: and flatter not your ſelves with the hopes of long life, becauſe you are young and healthful; but ſee to get your ſouls in ſuch a condition

that

that a long life may not be so much the matter of your hopes, nor death the cause of your fears. And remember, you are always going on to the Judgment seat of Christ, where you must have a tryal of ten thousand times greater concernment, than those that use to come before Earthly Princes and Judges; when the case must be decided where you must live for ever, whether in the highest joys, or the sorest torments. Had you not need then now to be getting a good cause: For according to the life you led here in the flesh, will that sentence pass, *The wicked must go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.* The God who sees you now, will judge you then by Christ the redeemer. Think what a life you shall wish you had led, when you come to the end of it, and must be judged for it, and lead such a one now. When the sugard baits of sin are presented, and you have much ado to hold off them, then think what bitterness it will be in the end; compare the honey with the gall, the present delight which is vanisht in a moment with the sting, and pain which endures eternally, and then judge and act like reasonable creatures. But above all, let your thoughts be even steept and swallowed up in the pleasant contemplations of that glory, which shall be revealed in, and bestowed upon the Lord Jesus. Whenever you are ready to faint and give out remember the joy that is set before you, and let that remembrance cheer and revive you. Consider what that goodness is, which God hath laid up in himself, for them that fear him, till you find your love enflamed towards him; and let your love put you upon more frequent thoughts, and earnest longings after him. Only see to fill up all your time with suitable actions, and then let it even please you to see your days post away so fast. Always keep it on your thoughts, that you are in a journey to a glorious Kingdom, and be often saying, now I am one day, or month, or year nearer than I was before. Stretch out thy self with a longing look towards thy Fathers house, shortly I shall be in the arms of my dear Saviour, and shall be joyning with Saints and Angels in the triumphant praises of Jehovah and the Lamb. And remember this happiness consists chiefly in being made perfectly holy, and therefore here must that grace be sown and grown up, that shall then be ripened into glory. And the more holy you are, the nearer to Heaven will you get whilst you stay on earth, and the meeter

for

for it will you be when you are taken off from the earth. Ever keep up such a sense of the excellency of this future blessedness, as may blast all other things in your esteem, and deaden the temptations that are taken from pleasures, riches and honours. Oh think how perfectly provided for must he needs be, who shall have God for his portion! How mad are they that would lose the least hope of this happiness for the whole World? And they that look for such great things, *what manner of persons ought they to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* Oh let nothing weary you, or turn you out of the way. Hold out a while longer, and you shall be plac'd out of the reach of all temptations for ever. Fasten upon nothing on this side heaven with any great delight or long stay: But still tell your selves, it's time enough to be happy when God shall take you to himself, so he will but here vouchsafe you that converse with him, whereof we in this state are capable. Let every thing you meet with be as a step toward mount *Sion*, and raise you nearer to heaven, and make you more desirous of it. And when you have been thus meditating and preparing, waiting and desiring a while, you shall assuredly find, that your labour was not in vain. Wherefore let such considerations as these make you stedfast, *unmovable, always abounding in your Lords work*, till at length you should be translated into his *joy*.

And thus I have dispatcht those directions I promised for the promoting of holiness, which was the last thing I had to do. It now remains, that we set our selves resolvedly, and sincerely to the practise of what God hath revealed to be our duty; which if we do, we need not doubt of his assistance and blessing; but upon your perseverance in well-doing, to which we have obliged our selves, may, through our Mediator, confidently expect his gracious acceptance, and his glorious Crown.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of his sheep by the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will: working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever, and ever. Amen. Heb. 13. 20, 21.

FINIS.